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THE MAID OF ORLEANS

*Five hundred copies of this Edition
have been printed and the type
distributed*

No......

LA PUCELLE THE MAID OF ORLEANS:
AN HEROIC-COMICAL POEM IN TWENTY-
ONE CANTOS BY AROUET DE VOLTAIRE:
A NEW AND COMPLETE TRANSLATION IN-
TO ENGLISH VERSE REVISED CORRECTED
AND AUGMENTED FROM THE EARLIER
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF W. H. IRELAND
AND THE ONE ATTRIBUTED TO LADY
CHARLEVILLE WITH THE VARIANTS NOW
FOR THE FIRST TIME TRANSLATED BY
ERNEST DOWSON: IN TWO VOLUMES:
VOLUME ONE

LONDON: PRINTED FOR **THE**
LUTETIAN SOCIETY 1899

CANTO I

ARGUMENT

*The chaste Loves of Charles VII and Agnes Sorel. Orleans
besieged by the English. Apparition of Saint Denis, etc.*

The praise of Saints my lyre shall not rehearse,
Feeble my voice, and too profane my verse ;
Yet shall my muse to laud our Joan incline,
Who wrought, 'tis said, such prodigies divine ;
Whose virgin hands revived the drooping flower
And gave to Gallia's lily ten-fold power ;
• Rescued its monarch from the impending fate
So dreaded from victorious England's hate ;
Sent him to Rheims, where king before the Lord
The sacring oil upon his head was poured ;
Although in aspect Joan was quite the maid,
Albeit in stays and petticoat arrayed ;
With boldest heroes she sustained her part,
For Joan possessed a Roland's dauntless heart :
For me, much better should I like by night,
A lamb-like beauty to inspire delight ;

But you shall see, if you peruse my page
That Joan of Arc had all a lion's rage ;
You'll tremble at the feats whereof you hear,
And more than all the wars she used to wage,
At how she kept her maidenhead — a year!
O Chapelain! O thou whose violin
Produced of old so harsh and vile a din ;
Whose bow Apollo's malediction had,
Which scraped his history in notes so sad ;
Old Chapelain! if honouring thine art
'Thou wouldst to me thy genius even impart,
I'll none of it — let it reward the pains
Of Motte-Houdart, who murdered Homer's strains.
Our good King Charles within his youthful prime
His revels kept at Tours, at Eastertime,
Where at a ball, (for well he loved to dance)
It so fell out, that for the good of France
He met a maid who beggared all compare,
Named Agnes Sorel, (Love had framed the fair).
Let your warm fancy youthful Flora trace,
Of Venus add her most enchanting grace,
The wood-nymph's stature and bewitching guise,
With Love's seductive air and brilliant eyes,
Arachne's art, the Syren's dulcet song, —
All these were her's and she could lead along

Kings, Heroes, Sages in her captive chain.
To see her, love her, feel the increasing pain,
Of young Desire, its growing warmth to prove,
With faltering utterance to speak of Love ;
To tremble and regard with dove-like eyes,
To strive and speak and utter nought but sighs,
Her hands, with a caressing hand to hold,
Till panting all the flames her breast enfold ;
By turns each other's tender pains impart,
And own the luscious thrill that sways the heart ;
To please, in short, is just a day's affair
For Kings in love are swift and debonnaire.
Agnes was fain — she knew the art to please
To deck the thing in garb of mysteries,
Veils of thin gauze, through which will always pry,
The envious courtier's keen, malignant eye.
To mask this business, that none might know
The King made choice of Councillor Bonneau ;
A trusty man of Tours, skilled in device
Who filled a post that is not over nice,
Which, though the court, that always seeks to lend
Beauty to all things, calls the Prince's friend,
The vulgar town and every rustic imp
Are grossly apt to designate a *Pimp*.
Upon Loire's banks this worthy Sieur Bonneau

Stood seigneur of an elegant chateau,
Whither one day, about the time of shade,
In a light skiff fair Agnes was conveyed,
There the same knight King Charles would fain recline
And there they supped, while Bonneau poured the wine
State was dismissed, though all was served with care,
Banquets of gods could not with this compare !
Our Lovers their delight and joy confessed,
Desire inflamed and transport filled each breast,
Supremely formed by sprightly wit to please
Eager they listen and alternate gaze ;
While their discourse, without indecence, free,
Gave their impatience fresh vivacity.
The ardent prince's eyes her charms devoured,
While in her ear soft tales of love he poured,
And with his knee her gentle knees deflowered.
The supper over, music played awhile,
Italian music — the chromatic style.
Flutes, hautboys, viols softly breathed around,
While three melodious voices swelled the sound ;
They sang historic allegories, their strain
Told of those heroes mighty Love had slain,
And those they sang, who some proud Fair to please,
Quit fields of glory for inglorious ease.
In a recess this skilful band was set

Hard by the chamber where the good king ate ;
As yet they sought their secret joys to screen
And Agnes fair enjoyed the whole unseen.
The moon upon the sky begins to glower ;
Midnight has struck ; it is Love's magic hour ;
In an alcove begilt with art most sure,
Not lit too much and yet not too obscure,
Between two sheets of finest Holland made
The lovely Agnes' glowing charms were laid.
Here did Dame Alix leave her to repose ;
But, cunning Abigail ! forgot to close
The private door that ope'd an easy way
To eager Charles, impatient of delay.
Perfumes most exquisite, with timely care
Are poured already on his braided hair :
And ye, who best have loved, can'tell the best
The anxious throbbings of our monarch's breast.
The sanctuary gain'd which shrines her charms,
In bed he clasps her naked to his arms.
Moment of ecstasy ! propitious night !
Their hearts responsive beat with fond delight.
Love's brightest roses glow on Agnes' cheek ;
In the warm blush, her fears and wishes speak.
But maiden fears in transport melt away,
And Love triumphant rules with sovran sway.

The ardent Prince now pressed her to his breast,
His eyes surveyed, his eager hands caressed,
Beauties enough which had been given her
To make a hermit an idolater.
Beneath a neck, whose dazzling whiteness shone
Pure and resplendent as the Parian stone,
With gentlest swell two breasts serenely move,
Severed and moulded by the hand of Love.
Each crowned with vermeil bud of damask rose,
Enchanting nipples, which ne'er know repose ;
You seemed the gaze and pressure to invite,
And wooed the longing lips to seek delight
Ever complying with my reader's taste,
I meant to paint as low as Agnes' waist ;
To show that symmetry, devoid of blot,
Where Argus' self could not discern a spot ;
But Virtue, which the world good manners calls,
Stops short my hand : — and lo ! the pencil falls.
In Agnes all was beauty, all was fair ;
Voluptuousness, whereof she had her share,
Spurred every sense which instant took the alarm,
Adding new grace to every brilliant charm
It animated : Love can use disguise,
And pleasure heightens beauty in our eyes.
Three months on rapid pinions wing their flight

And leave our pair unsated with delight.
From Love's soft couch they seek the genial board
Where by rich food their wasted strength's restored.
Then eager for the chase on steeds of Spain
With deep-tongued hounds they sweep the echoing plain.
Returned, the bath's prepared, the rifled East,
Of essence sweet and perfumes yields its best ;
As on the skin with softer polish shew,
Or teach the cheek with warmer blush to glow.
Dinner is served. How delicate the fare !
The bird of Phasis, and the heath-cock rare ;
From some score stews the savoury odours rise ;
They charm the nose, the palate and the eyes.
Wine d'Aï, whose froth in sparks died quick away
And goblets of the yellow-hued Tokay.
Warmed the young brain with fire that could not fail
In sallies of the liveliest wit to exhale ;
Brilliant as liquor when the bubbles swim,
And sparkling dance around the goblet's brim :
When the good king, facetious, deigns to speak
Bonneau's fat sides with peals of laughter shake.
The dinner ended, mirth and jest went round,
Blind to their own, their neighbours' faults they found ;
Verses of Master Alain loud were bawled,
And learned doctors of the Sorbonne called.

A harlequin who wore the motley shape,
Some squalling parots, and an antic ape,
A few selected friends at close of day,
Attend the jolly monarch to the play:
Who with the night returns again to prove
The tender inebriety of love.
Thus nurtured in the bosom of delight
To each blessed day succeeds more blissful night.
No lassitude, no bickering molests,
No jealous fear disturbs their tranquil breasts.
From each succeeding hour fresh pleasure springs,
Near Agnes, time and love forget their wings.
When Charles enraptured sank within her arms,
Kissed her ripe lips and revelled in her charms:
"Dear Idol of my soul, Agnes! he'd cry,
How fully, how supremely blest am I,
Whilst in thy snowy arms thus fondly pressed,
I reign sole monarch of thy tender breast.
To conquer and to reign is folly now,
My parliament disowns me, and I bow
To conquering England's haughty tyranny;
Well! let them reign, but let them envy me,
Kingship enough is to be king of thee!"
This speech was not heroic, may be said,
But when a hero haply lies in bed,

With a fair mistress, even a hero may
Speak as love guides and reck not what he say.
As thus he lived from every sorrow free
Just like an abbot in his rich abbey ;
The English Prince, with whom war was the word,
In camp well armed, well-booted too and spurred,
With girded sword, and ever-ready lance
Victoriously strode through conquered France.
With rapid march the country side he scours,
Nor walls withstand him nor embattled towers.
Slaughter and pillage mark his dreaded way,
Defenceless females fall his soldiers' prey ;
Whole convents to their violation yield,
Whole caves are drained by many a vintage filled ;
Gold they purloined, which relics had enchased,
Then into useful coin the ore debased :
Each sacred ordinance by them was spurned,
Churches and chapels into stables turned ;
Just so when greedy wolves, with ravening eyes,
Spring mid the fold and seize the bleating prize,
Tear with their reeking jaws the victim's breast,
While in a distant meadow lulled to rest,
Colin, enfolded in Egeria's arms,
Sleeps undisturbed, contented with her charms,
While near him lo ! his dog devours the meat

Which, at his supper, Colin could not eat.
Bright apogee, golden gleam so high,
Mansion of saints beyond weak mortal's eye ;
T' was thence good Denis gazed on France, her woes,
The pangs inflicted by her victor foes,
Paris in chains and its most Christian king
For Agnes' kisses leaving everything.
Grieved to the soul, the good saint turned askance,
For Denis long had patron been of France :
As Mars was tutelary saint of Rome,
And Athens looked to Pallas of the loom.
But in our favour greatly were the odds,
One saint's worth more than fifty heathen gods!
"Ah, by my soul ! he cried, it is not just
To see crash down an Empire so August,
Where I myself religion's banner bore ;
And shall the Lilies' throne be seen no more ?
Blood of the Valois ! thy pains move my breast
Let us not suffer the aspiring crest
Of the fifth Henry's brothers without right
The lawful heir of France to put to flight ;
I have, though Saint, as God may give me grace
A rooted hatred of the British race,
For if the book of destiny speak true,
The day shall come when this bold-thinking crew

Shall laugh the saints and their decrees to scorn ;
The Roman annals will by them be torn
And yearly they'll in effigy destroy
Rome's sacred pontiff and the Lord's Viceroy.
Let us revenge this sacrilegious thought,
Punish the crime before the crime be wrought.
My beloved French shall all be catholics ;
These haughty English all be heretics ;
Chase hence these British dogs, leave not a man,
Let's punish them by some unheard-of plan,
For all the wickedness which they intend."
The gallic patron Denis, thus he quoth,
Spicing his *pater-noster* with an oath.

While thus alone the saint reviewed the case,
At Orleans a council then took place,
Blockaded was the city round about,
Nor could it longer for the King hold out ;
Some noblemen and counsellors of might,
Half of them pedants and half bred to fight,
All grieve their common fate in sundry tone,
Their only question : "What is to be done ?
Let us, my friends, where Honour points the way
Sell them our lives as dearly as we may !"
Such the sad terms in which Dunois bewails,
To Poton and La Hire who bite their nails.

"By Heaven ! cried Richemont, wherefore thus sit tame ?
Let us at once set Orleans in a flame ;
Let us deride the foe and then expire,
Leaving them nought but ashes, smoke and fire."
Trimouille exclaimed : "That moment vain I rue,
When parents made me native of Poitou ;
To Orleans town from Milan fain to flee,
I left alas ! my charming Dorothy ;
Though reft of hope, fore Heaven, I yet will fight,
Yet must I die unblessed by her dear sight!"
Louvet, the president, great personage,
Whose grave appearance might have dubbed him sage,
Exclaimed : "'T would previously be my intent
That we should pass an act of parliament
Against the British ; and that in such case
Each point be canvassed in its proper place."
A mighty clerk was Louvet, though aright
He did not know his truly sorry plight,
How his fair lady was a rebel turned,
With mutual flame for gallant Talbot burned.
This had be known, his gravity, indeed,
Had soon found precedents how to proceed ;
Louvet, unknowing of the fateful thrall,
Strives with male eloquence to rescue Gaul.
Amid this council of the wise and brave,

Were heard orations eloquent and grave
Virtue inspiring and the public good ;
Foremost in flowing phrase is understood.
La Hire, who, though to long harangues inclined,
So ably speaks as to enchain the mind.
Much were their arguments with wisdom fraught,
Their words were gold but they concluded nought
While thus haranguing, they beheld in air
A strange appearance most divinely fair ;
A beauteous phantom with a vermeil face
Bestrode a sun-beam with celestial grace ;
Which, as it through the expanse and aether sailed,
A saint-like odour all around exhaled ;
Upon its head the spirit a mitre bore,
With double-points such as grave prelates wore, -
By lambent flames its temples were confined.
Its gold dalmatic fluttered in the wind ;
The embroidered stole was carried over all,
While the hand held the truncheon pastoral
That erst was known as *lituus augural*.

Struck with the sight which they but ill discerned
Each his regard upon his fellow turned ;
First Trimouille, a lecherous devotee,
Began to pray upon his bended knee.

Richemont, whose breast an iron heart concealed,
Blasphemer, and whose lips but oaths revealed,
Raising his voice exclaimed: "It is the devil
From Hell arrived, dread mansion of all evil ;
I deem it pleasing pastime to confer
In friendly intercourse with Lucifer."
Louvét made off as fast as he could trot
To fetch in haste the Holy water-pot.
Bewildered Poton, Dunois and La Hire,
Opened their eyes all three appalled with fear ;
Stretched on his belly every valet fawned :
The saint appeared in lustrous garb adorned,
Borne on bright gleam, descended to the ground,
Then dealt his holy benediction round.
They knelt and crossed themselves: the vision fair
Raised them from earth with a paternal air,
Then said aloud: "My sons, be not afraid,
My name is Denis, Sanctity my trade ;
Your grandsires I both loved and catechized
But now mine honest soul is scandalized
To see my Godson Charles I loved so dear,
Whose land's in flames, whose subjects quake with fear,
Rather than seek to comfort the distressed,
Prefer to dally with a girl's white breast.
I am therefore come my utmost skill to try

And turn from France impending misery.
I wish to end the woes you have endured,
'Tis said all ills by contraries are cured ;
If then king Charlie, for a harlot fain,
Will lose his kingdom and his honour stain ;
I have resolved to save the king and land
And work by purpose by a virgin's hand ;
If ye are Frenchmen tried and Christians true,
If for protection from on high you'd sue,
If ye are Frenchmen tried and Christians true,
Assist me in my sacred enterprise ;
Show me the place where I can rouse the best
This veritable Phoenix from her nest."

Thus spoke the venerable, sainted sire.
In one loud laugh his auditors conspire.
Young Richemont, born for pleasantry and joke
Anon the learned preacher thus bespoke :
"Ah, wherefore, good Sir Saint, take so much pains,
Abandoning for earth your heavenly plains,
Of us poor sinful mortals to enquire
For this bright jewel which you so admire.
To save a city I could never see
That there was magic in virginity ;
Besides to seek it here seems hardly wise

When you've so much of it in Paradise ;
Have you not more virginities at home
Than tapers at Loretto or at Rome?
But here in France there are, alas ! no more
Our convents are all silent on that score.
Our Archers, Officers and Princes high
Have long since made the provinces run dry.
They stop at nothing, and — the Saints in spite !
Make bastards more than orphans, any night.
To finish good Sir Denis, our dispute,
Seek maids elsewhere ; there's no one here will suit."

Deep blushed the Saint to hear such lewd discourse,
And quickly mounted on his heavenly horse,
Upon his sunbeam ; not another word :
As through the air he sped, his steed he spurred.
In search of that inestimable toy
To crown his future hopes and present joy.
Well ! let him go, and while he speeds his way,
Perched on the sunbeam which illumines day,
Dear reader, when on love you set your mind,
May you gain that which Denis went to find.

CANTO II

ARGUMENT

Joan armed by Saint Denis repairs to the Court of Charles VII, at Tours: What occurred on the way, and how she received her brevet of Virginity.

Thrice happy he who finds a maiden head !
Great is the blessing, but who moves the heart
Is still more plainly to be envied,
And to be loved is the most pleasing part.
To tear up flowers — why, all can do't who start
It is another task to cull the rose !
Most learned clerks have ruined by their glose
So fair a text, by making duty war
With pleasure, and to Happiness a bar.
I'll write a book I'm positive will sell
To teach the precious art of living well.
And golden precepts in soft numbers sing
To shew how pleasures may from duty spring.
Denis shall quit his mansion in the skies
To aid me in my worthy enterprise ;

Him have I sung, his hand shall be my stay.
 Meantime it were as well that I should say
 What came from his appearing, as saints may. *
 Close to the confines of wide Champaign's land,
 Where full a hundred posts in order stand
 On which are graven Martlets three to say
 That on rich Lorraine's soil you wend your way,
 By ancients little known there stands a town,
 Which has in history acquired renown.
 For thence salvation and great glory came
 To the white lilies and the Gallic name.
 Let us all sing of famous Dom Remy
 And waft its praises down posterity
 O Dom Remy ! though thy poor precincts hold
 Nor muscadine, nor peach, nor citrons gold,
 Nor damning wine, nor mines, nor precious stone,
 Yet 't is to thee France owes her glorious Joan.
 There Joan was born ! A curate of the place
 Anxious that all his flock should merit grace
 Ardent in bed, at table and at prayer,
 And once a monk, was father of our Fair,

* Variant: *It is another task to cull the rose !*
 Dear friend, may thus our fortune be arranged ;
 So be it ! and the subject may be changed !
 Close to the confines, *etc.*

A chamber maid, robust and plump to view,
Was the blest mould wherein our pastor threw
This beauty who put off the English yoke.
At sixteen years, this damsel was bespoke
To serve the stable at an humble inn
At Vaucouleurs ; where even then the din
Of her renown had stirred the country side.
Her air was proud but gentle with her pride,
Her big, black eyes diffused a steady light
While two and thirty teeth all snowy white
Adorned a mouth that spread from ear to ear,
But red as ever ripest cherries were.
Firm were her breasts, although of colour brown,
Tempting the cowl, the helmet and the gown ;
Both active, vigorous, and full of blood,
Her large plump hands for every work were good,
She'd carry burthens, empty cans of wine,
Serve peasant, noble, citizen, divine ;
And while she worked, give many a lusty blow
To guests too pert, whose meddling hands would know
How her bare breast felt, or, perhaps her thigh.
From morn to eve she worked with laughing eye,
Watered her horses, tended, combed their hair,
Then brought them home, and, withal, rode them bare,
As any knight of Roman chivalry.

Wisdom Divine! O Providence profound!
Oft doth thy will presumptuous pride confound.
How trifling are the mighty in thine eyes,
How great the little are whom they despise.
Thy servant Denis went not to the Court,
Of nobles and princesses the resort;
No, nor to you dame duchesses so fair,
For well he knew the jewel was not there;
He ran—my friends, be not incredulous!
To seek for virtue in a public-house.
High time it was that to our maiden Joan
France's apostle made his wishes known;
Great was the danger of the public good.
Malice of Satan is well understood,
And had the Saint arrived one moment late,
Poor France indeed had had a sorry fate.
A Cordelier, whose name was Grisbourdon,
Arrived with Chandos late from Albion,
Had at this pot-house for a period staid;
And as his country he loved Joan the maid.
He was his order's boast, support and pride,
On holy mission sent on every side;
A confessor, a preacher and a spy,
And more, a learned clerk in sorcery,
Versed in that art which once was Egypt's boast,

That art by sages taught a mighty host,
Practised by Hebrew and by ancient sage,
Alas! unknown in this degenerate age!

As he perused his books of mystery
He found how Joan should cross his destiny;
And her short petticoat should surely hide
The fate of England and of France beside.
The monk by aid of genie rendered bold,
Swore by his frock, the Devil and Saint Francis
He'd make to Joan such vigorous advances,
That he should soon that bright Palladium hold.
"As monk and Briton do I doubly stand,
Pledged to the Church and to my native land;
And much with patriotic zeal incline
To serve their purpose, when it answers mine."
Meantime, a boor in ignorance arrayed
With him disputed the illustrious maid.
His rival was a doughty muleteer
At least a match for any Cordelier;
Who sued both night and day Joan's heart to move
With clumsy offers of eternal love.
The occasion and the sweet equality
Made Joan regard him with complacency;
But chastity the flame could still control

Which through her eyes slipped straight into her soul.
Roc Grisbourdon beheld the kindling fire,
Better than Joan he knew her heart's desire.
His dreaded rival straight he came to find,
And thus bespoke him speciously and kind.
"O puissant hero! who in times of need,
Doth pass in force the comely beasts you feed *
I grant such vigour may deserve the maid,
To whom my ardent vows are likewise paid.
Inveterate rivals steadfast both in love,
Thus must we still a mutual hindrance prove.
For her in amity let both agree,
Rivals no more, we'll friendly lovers be,
And both partake of the delicious treat
Which both might forfeit in the conflict's heat ;
Conduct me to the couch where lies the fair,
The fiend of sleep anon I'll invoke there.
His poppies sweet will close her eyes in sleep
While we, alternately, Love's vigils keep."
The monk forthwith, bedecked with cord and cowl

* Variant: "*O puissant hero! who, in times of need,*
Doth pass in force the animals you feed,
To Joan I know thy passion thou wouldst prove :
I too regard her with no lukewarm love.
I grant such vigour, *etc.*

By magic art invoked that demon foul,
Who anciently the name of Morpheus bore,
That leaden devil who in France will snore
When pleaders (as the matin ray gains force)
Speed to discant on *Cujas* till they're hoarse ;
And next at church assists at the discourse, *
By Massilon's poor journeymen preached o'er *
On topics three, quotations by the store : *
While even our theatre's in so sad a plight,
We seldom drive him from the pit at night.
Called by the monk, he mounts his ebon car,
Drawn by young screech-owls through the musky air.
With eyes half-closed he softly cleaves the shade
And stretches yawning o'er the sleeping maid.
Scatters his poppies, in narcotic wreaths,
And round a soporific vapour breathes.
So Father Girard who confessed the fair,
Breathed, it is said, on gentle Cadière,
And with his breath so lecherous and warm
Filled her with devils in a perfect swarm.

Our two gallants, who watched this sweet repose,
Spurred on by waking thoughts, removed the clothes

* Variant omits these three lines.

That covered Joan, and on her bosom tried
With dice the anxious contest to decide,
Which should try first his courage in the breach:
The churchman won — magician's overreach!
Grisbourdon, eager to possess his prize,
Springs towards the fair — imagine his surprise!
Denis appears and Joan opens her eyes!
Heavens! how sinners tremble at a saint!
The monk and muleteer had like to faint.
Fear prompts to flight and both alike retire,
Their breasts still burning with perverse desire.
Have you not thus in crowded cities seen,
The frightened votaries of the Cyprian queen,
Scared by rough bailiffs, naked spring from bed,
And from the officers escape: so fled
Our quaking lechers most discomforted.

Denis approached, the maiden Joan to cheer,
At the late dire attempt appalled with fear:
Then thus bespoke her: "Blessèd maid elect!
The Gods of Kings by thee will France protect,
And Albion's chalky cliffs shall shortly mourn,
To see her vanquished squadrons homewards turn.
Wondrous the inexplicable ways of God!
The ruined world's refitted at his nod.

And at his breath, the reed no more does bend,
But, like the cedar, its rough arms extend.
Hills vanish at his voice and valleys rise,
His word the unfathomable Ocean dries!
Before thy steps his thunder shall go by,
And all around thee shall his terror fly;
Angels attend, of victory and wrath,
To open unto thee bright glory's path.
Quit then thine humble toil, and let thy name
Be henceforth written in the lists of fame. * ”
At this discourse, so truly tragical,
So comforting and theological,
Our Joan, amazed, gaped wide with vacant look,
And thought t'was Greek the saintly Denis spoke
But Grace — that august thing soon operates,
And in her mind its brightness penetrates;
Joan felt these flights which such a gift imparts,
Deeply its ardour struck into her heart.
No longer is she Joan, the chamber-maid,
Rather a hero for hot war arrayed.
As when we view some coarse, unpolished bear
Of an old miser's store become the heir,
Transformed his house is to a palace wide;

* **V a r i a n t:** Follow and leave thine humble trade alone,
Joan is a hero, Charles is but a Joan.

His timid look assumes an air of pride ;
The great admire his pride ; with one accord
The small rush eagerly to call him "Lord !"
Or rather such the happy, homely she,
Formed both by nature and by art to be,
The lover of a brothel's wanton joy
Or fill an opera dancer's loose employ ;
Whose mother's circumspect, considerate head,
Had reared her for a wealthy farmer's bed,
But whom the hand of love expert in feats,
Transported to a monarch 'twixt two sheets
Her lively beauty bears the stamp of queen,
Armed with sweet majesty her eyes are seen,
Her voice at once assumes the sovereign sound,
And mounting with her rank her spirit is found.

Wherefore to hasten the august intent
Joan and Saint Denis to the chapel went ;
Where on the altar lay, to please the eyes,
(Oh, maiden Joan ! how great was thy surprise!)
A handsome harness, dazzling to the sight,
Forth from the arsenals of the empyrean height.
Just at that instant's time the armour came
From the Archangel sent, Michael his name.
The head-piece, there, was seen of Deborah ;

The pointed nail of fated Sisera ;
The round, smooth stone the pious shepherd threw,
Which great Goliath's temples split in two ;
The jaw wherewith the furious Samson fought,
Who snapped new cords, regarding them as nought,
When by his light o'love he was betrayed ;
Those pots with which good Gideon dismayed
Of Midian, the unbelieving band ;
The sword which graced the lovely Judith's hand ;
That treacherous fair, most holy though beside
Who, for the Lord, did gallant homicide,
By stealing to her sleeping love in bed,
And whilst defenceless cutting off his head.

Astonished at these sights was Joan the maid,
Who in these arms was speedily arrayed ;
Gauntlets, arm-coverings and helm she took,
Of thigh pieces and breast plate fixed each hook,
With stone, nail, dagger, jaw-bone, javelin, lance,
Marched, tried herself and burned for fame and France.

As coursers are by heroines required,
Joan of the muleteer a steed desired ;
When instantly there stood before the lass
A fine gray-haired and loudly braying ass,

Well curried, bridled, saddled, while his head
A plumage bore ; rich clothes his back o'erspread ;
The ground he pawed, quite ready for the course,
Just like a Thracian or an English horse.

Two wings were carried by this noble gray
Wherewith he sometimes took an aerial way,
Like Pegasus who through Parnassian shades,
Conveyed of old the nine immortal maids,
Or Hippogriff, who carried to the moon
Astolpho on a visit to St. John.

This ass who proffer'd thus his rump to Joan
To my kind reader shall be better known ;
Another Canto may his worth declare,
And tell his journeys through the plains of air.
Till then, this happy ass I bid thee fear,
He has his mystery, tremble and revere !

Already Joan is mounted on her gray,
And Denis sits, astride upon his ray :
In haste they seek Loire's pleasant banks to bring
Tidings of joy to their enamoured king.
Sometimes the ass would trot and sometimes fly,
Winging its course 'mid regions of the sky.
Ever with lust inspired the cordelier,
Somewhat recovered from his shame and fear,

Using in short the dire magician's rule
Turned the poor muleteer into a mule ;
Then mounting, spurred and very roundly swore
He'd follow Joan, all earth and ocean o'er.
The muleteer, concealed in mule's disguise
Thought by the change that he should share the prize ;
His filthy soul was so devoid of grace,
As scarcely to discern its change of place.
Joan and Denis to Tours still bent their flight,
To seek the monarch plunged in soft delight ;
And as at night near Orléans' walls they crossed,
They passed the encampments of the British host.
These haughty Britons, who had quaffed full deep,
Their wine digested in profoundest sleep.
Drunk was each soldier and each sentry found,
Nowhere was heard the drum or trumpet's sound ;
Some sleep in tents, stretched naked on the floor,
And some promiscuous with their pages snore.

Which Denis viewing, turned him to the maid,
And in a most paternal whisper, said :
"Have you not, Daughter of Election, heard
What Nisus once, in nightly battle, dared
To snatch Euryalus from the sleeping foe ;
When the brave Rutuli in darkness bled,

And Turnus' troops were numbered with the dead?
So happened it with Rhesus, when of old
The son of Tydeus, vehement and bold,
Aided by famed Ulysses and the night
Sent, without hazarding the dangerous fight,
So many Trojans who had nobly bled
To the cold slumber of their kindred dead.
Say, will my Joan a like adventure try?"
Quoth Joan : "I'm not well read in history ;
But strange would be the courage, in my sight,
Which slaughters enemies who can not fight."

Thus having spoke, the maid beheld a tent
Whereon the moon her silvery radiance bent,
Which to her dazzled eyes appeared to be
A chief's or some young lord's of high degree :
A hundred flasks of vintage rare being there.
Joan, whose assurance beggared all compare,
The ample remnants of a pasty seized,
And with Sieur Denis drank six bumpers down,
To France, and health and fortune of her crown.
The famous Chandos, he who owned the tent,
Stretched on his back lay, sleeping out his bent ;
Joan promptly seized his redoubtable sword
And slashed the velvet breeches of my lord.

As David, loved of God, had done of yore,
When he found Saul, and might have smote him sore ;
He cut from off the sleeper with a knife
Part of his shirt, but did not take his life.
That to all potentates he might make plain,
What he dared do, and how he could abstain.
Near to John Chandos lay a youthful page,
Of fourteen years, but charming for his age,
Two globes displaying to the gazer's sight,
Which might have passed for loves, they were so white.
An *écritoire*, well furnished, stood hard-by,
Where the half-tipsy youth would sometimes try,
His slender talents at the rhyming trade,
In tender trifles for his favourite maid.
Joan takes the ink, her virgin hands design
Three *fleurs de lys* exactly 'neath his spine
This presage for the good of France was sent
T'was of its monarch's love the monument.
When Denis saw his pleasure was not damped,
These English buttocks with French lilies stamped.

Who with the sense of shame next morning shrunk ?
T'was Chandos, who the night before was drunk ;
Waking, to see upon his pretty page
The *fleurs de lys*. Burning with proper rage,

He cries "Alarm!" ; he thinks they are betrayed,
And seeks his sword which by his couch was laid
He sought in vain, is struck with grim surprise,
Gone are his breeches too, he rubs his eyes.
He grumbles, swears and vows with all his heart
In feats like these the Devil has had a part.

Ah! that a golden sunbeam and an ass
Which carried Joan, a gray and winged ass,
So quickly round the globe should thus have flown!
Arrived at Court are Denis and our Joan.
By long experience had the prelate proved
That joking at the court of France was loved,
The insolent remarks that Richemont threw
To him at Orléans he remembered too.
A similar adventure to escape
He thought it better to transform his shape,
Nor more the bishop's holy form expose ;
Wherefore our Saint the grim resemblance chose
Of Roger, noble Lord of Baudricourt,
Brave warrior and a catholic most sure,
Bold speaker, loyal and to be believed,
And for all that at Court not ill received.
"God's day!" he cried, declaiming to the king,
"Why in a province are you loitering?"

A slavish king, and fettered by love's chain,
What ! can that arm from valiant feats refrain !
Quit myrtle wreaths with tinsel roses twined.
Let diadems your royal forehead bind !
You leave your cruel enemies alone
To govern France and occupy your throne !
Go forfeit life or once more gain that land
By robbers ravished from your rightful hand ;
To grace your front the diadem was made,
Meet for your hand the laurel is arrayed.
God, who with courage has my soul inspired,
God, who my speech with energy hath fired,
Is ready now his favour to impart,
Dare but believe, dare rouse your softened heart,
Follow at least this Amazon elect,
She is thy stay, thy throne she will protect ;
The King of Kings by her illustrious arm,
Will save our altars and our laws from harm ;
Joan shall with thee, this family appal,
This English family ; the scourge of Gaul.
Be but a man — and if, as I suppose,
Some girl must always lead you by the nose ;
At least, fly her, whose soft but treacherous chain
Your heart subdues and is at once your bane ;
And worthy so of this assistance strange

Follow the steps of her who will avenge.
'T was but of late, my friend, you learned the truth
When Louis fled the arms of blooming youth,
That beauty exorcised by Linière
In the Low Country, on Rhine's bank so fair
He came to rouse him with fame's clarion breath,
And instant vanished every fear of death.
However vice Gaul's monarch may controul,
There's still a fund of honour in his soul. * "

The veteran soldier's speech propitious proved,
And drowsy slumber from the monarch moved.
So an Archangel, on the last great day,
Appearing high, in terrible array,
Shall with trumpet's voice terrific, shake
The Universe and death's long bondage break,
From dreary tombs the sleeping ghosts invite,
And call re-animated dust to light!
Charles is awake, his soul with ardour warms,
His only answer is to cry: "To arms!"
He grasps his lance, and only longs to fight;
In war, not pleasure now, he finds his charms.

* Variant: However love Gaul's monarch may controul,
There's still, *etc.*

The preceding six lines being omitted.

Recovered soon from transport's sudden heat,
When cooler reason reassumed her seat,
The maid he'd see, and judge of her intent,
Whether by Heaven or by Satan sent ;
Whether as truth the prodigy to treat,
Or deem the whole a fiction and a cheat ;
Turning his head toward the dauntless Joan
Thus spoke the King in a majestic tone,
Which any might have feared but she alone :
"Joan, hear me : Joan, if thou'rt a maid, avow !"
Joan answered : "Oh, great Sire, give orders now
That learned leeches, spectacles on nose,
Well versed in female mysteries to depose,
With clerks, apothecaries, matrons tried,
Be summoned here the matter to decide.
In such affairs whoever boasts of skill,
May truss up Joan, and forthwith gaze his fill !"

From this reply, which wisdom's help had fired,
The King perceived the maiden was inspired.
"Good !" said the King, "since this you know so well,
Daughter of Heaven, I pray thee, instant tell
What with my fair one passed last night in bed ?
Speak free !" "Why nothing, Sire !" Joan promptly said.
Surprised, the king knelt down, and cried aloud

"A miracle!" then crossed himself, and bowed.
Immediately appeared the fur-capped band,
Their bonnets on, Hippocrates in hand,
Came to observe the bosom fine and pure
Of the Amazon who must their gaze endure.
Naked they stripped her, and the senior sage
Having considered all that could engage,
Above, below, on parchment then displayed
Certification that Joan was a maid.

This brevet bold, replete with sacred grace,
Joan took and marching on with measured pace,
Straight to the King returned, and on her knee
She showed her spoils of war triumphantly,
Which she had won from England in the night.
"Permit," said she, "Oh, monarch of great might,
That subject to thy laws thy servant's arm
Dare France avenge and banish her alarm;
Fulfilled shall be the oracles, I swear;
Nay, by my courage, in thy sight, I dare,
By this my maiden-head and this bright blade,
Vouch that at Rheims you soon shall be arrayed
Full King, anointed with the holy oil;
Of conquered English you shall reap the spoil,
Who now the gates of Orléans surround.

Come and fulfil thy destiny profound ;
Come and abandoning the banks of Tours,
Count me henceforth a servitor of yours.”
The courtiers pressed around her in amaze,
Some looked towards Heaven, some bent on Joan the
(gaze,

Each seconded alike the bold discourse,
And shouted joyously till they grew hoarse.
No warrior was there in the noble crowd
But as a squire to serve her had been proud,
Her lance to bear and gladly life resign ;
Not one was there but owned the glow divine,
The thirst for fame and felt a wish most strong,
To ravish that which she had kept so long.
The knights make preparation to depart ;
One greets the ancient mistress of his heart ;
One to an usurer for credit prays,
One reckons with his host and never pays.
Denis unfurled the Oriflamme on high,
And at the sight proud grew the monarch's eye ;
The Heaven-sent banner waving in his sight ;
Filled him with hope coequal with his might ;
Convinced a heroine and an ass with wings
Must bring him palms and rare immortal things.
Denis desired on quitting this retreat,

That the two lovers should by no means meet ;
Too many tears their last adieux had cost,
Agnes still slept, although the hour was late
Little she thought of such a turn of fate ;
A happy dream with soft illusive charms,
Gave her enamoured monarch to her arms ;
Retraced the transports of the former day,
Too transient joys, that fled too fast away !
Deceitful dream to flatter thus the sense !
The lover flies and Denis leads him hence.
At Paris thus a Doctor of great skill
Will let the glutton eat but half his fill,
Inexorable prove to every wish,
And pitiless remove his favourite dish.

No sooner could the saint succeed to win
The King of France from his delightful sin,
Than swift he ran to seek his pleasing care,
His valiant Virgin, his redoubted fair.
He had resumed his beatific air
His tone devout, his flat and short-cut hair,
The hallowed ring, the crozier pastoral,
The gloves, the cross, the cap episcopal.
"Go on," he cried ; "thy monarch serve and France,
On thee shall ever fall my gracious glance .

But with the laurel of high courage twine
The rose of modesty ; let both combine.
Thy steps will I to Orléans safely lead.
When Talbot, mighty chief of miscreant breed,
By lust infernal fired, and heart enchained,
Shall think Dame President impure is gained,
Beneath thine arm robust shall end his fame ;
Punish his crime, but never do the same ;
Let true devotion with true courage vie !
I go—adieu—guard thy Virginity !”
The fair one made a solemn vow she'd try,
Whereat her patron started for the sky.

CANTO III

*Description of the Palace of Folly — Combat near Orléans
Agnes disguises herself in Joan's armour in order to rejoin
her lover — She is taken prisoner by the English and her
modesty is put to great straits.*

'T is not enough in courage to abound,
Or view with eye serene the battle's rage.
Men fit to lead a world of troops are found
In every climate, and in every age.
For in due turn each nation hath its share
Of horrid war, and Death's terrific dance
In equal portion. Nor doth aught declare
Britons out-done by the bold sons of France;
Nor is Iberia less than Germany:
Each has been beat and each shall beaten be!
Great Condé was o'ercome by brave Turenne; *
And haughty Villars yielded to Eugene.

* *VARIANT: Great Condé was o'ercome by brave Turenne;
And conquered Créqui, conquered once again.
And conquered Créqui, conquered once again.
Played double or quits with Eugene, with success.*

Whilst he, who for King Stanislas drew forth
His warlike bands, the Quixote of the North,
Whose valour seemed quite pure of human stain;
Did he not see, in depths of far Ukraine,
At Pultava, his laurels brought to naught
By a poor rival quite beneath his thought. *

* Variant: *By a poor rival quite beneath his thought,*
The vulgar herd to astonish and deceive,
Here is a certain method, by your leave!
A god-like character at once to find.
And still to pass for humble and resigned: —
For instance take that case in Holy writ,
Of cunning Jethro's son-in-law of wit!
Who once for king and more than king was ta'en
By those good folk who came of Jethro's strain,
Whose scanty wits much faith had rendered blind;
He said that God, revealing His behind,
Had taught him all His holy law, whereby,
He and his nephews were perpetually
In sanctioned idleness to be maintained;
All cases of importance had ordained,
When lepers, well-bred women — such his drift —
Must change their dress, put on another shift,
Appear abroad, or in their chambers snore.
With fancy fire, and rockets quite a score,
And such like squibs, and flashes in the sky,
Done from a rock secluded, rather high,
Whereof he had, by orders most express,
Forbidden to curious folk the least access,
The simpletons were driven to declare
A tempest raged, such noise was in the air.
The Almighty's hand they all avowed to see,

A happier secret far, might I advise,
Would be, to cheat and dazzle vulgar eyes,
In my esteem ; 't is far the surest way
To rank a God, thus leading foes astray ;
The mighty Romans, to whose power all bowed
Europe subdued mid miracles a cloud.
Mars, Pollux, Jupiter, the gods all sought
To guide the eagle ; each for Romans fought.
Great Bacchus, who all Asia rendered slave,
Old Hercules and Alexander brave,
That each with awe the vanguished might inspire,
Proclaimed alike great Jupiter his sire ;

And trembled for the Prophet's bravery.
The rascal knew his men and all their ways,
And kept his mountain for some forty days ;
Then suddenly upon the plain appeared,
While on his forehead, flaming ox-horns reared
The charlatan's expert phenomenon
Their silly wits with one accord had won.
He saw that God, within a bush concealed,
To him their chief such lesson had revealed.
That was enough ! Great was their reverence
And each and all made him obeisance ;
Thinking that Heaven's vengeance would ensue,
If anybody failed in what was due
To Monsieur Aaron. Thus came to be made
Statutes, whose author, clumsy at his trade
Deserved a madhouse ; which this people crass
Held to be laws for all men in a mass.

Wherefore, proud monarchs of the earth with dread,
When'er it thundered knelt and bowed the head.

Denis full well these famed examples knew,
And to the marvellous had recourse too ;
He vowed that maiden Joan, with Albion's race
Should pass for holy and a girl of grace :
That Bedford, Talbot famed for gallantry,
Tyrconnell, Chandos, man of mockery,
Should deem all supernatural in Joan
And in her arm, a force superior own.
To prosper in this enterprise so bold,
He sought a Benedictine friar old ;
Not one whose labours famed were to enhance
The literary stores that blazon France ;
A prior this, grown fat in ignorance,
Who ne'er enriched the libraries of France,
No controverted points disturbed his head,
Though but his missal Brother Lourdis read.
Hard by the moon, where erstwhile as they say
The Paradise of fools was held to lay,
Near that abyss profound, where endless night
And Erebus and Chaos meet the sight,
Which, ere the time the universe was made,
Knew no controul, and their blind power displayed,

To a vast, cavernous and dismal place,
Whose gloom the pleasant sunbeams never grace ;
Where nothing but a light terrific gleams,
Diffusing pale, deceitful, trembling beams ;
An *Ignis Fatuus* its only star,
Hobgoblins wanton in the peopled air.
Of this fell country Folly is the queen,
An aged child, who with gray beard is seen, *
With mouth like Danchet, long-eared and squint-eyed,
Club footed, moving with a limping stride ;
Of Ignorance, 't is said, the child is she :
Around her throne is ranged her family,
Obduracy and Pride in Folly's dress,
Credulity and sluggard idleness.
Though vainly weak and impotent the while,
She's served and flattered in the regal style ;
A forceless phantom, despicable thing,
Like Chilperic, that truly idle King.
Her greedy minister is one, Deceit,
And all is ruled by this official cheat ;
Folly he deems his worthy instrument.
Her courts are furnished to her heart's content ;

* Variant: *An aged child who with gray beard is seen ;*
Wide gapes her mouth and crooked squint her eyes,
Coral and the sceptre's place supplies.

Folk, who astrology have studied long,
Sure of their art, but always proving wrong,
Though dupes and knaves, believed incontinent,
'T is there you find the skilled in alchemy,
Producing gold but still in penury,
And Rosi-crucians, and those mad-folk, all,
Who try their wits on points theological.

Of all the Brothers of fat Lourdis' sect,
Himself the Saint thought fitting to elect ;
When night on clouds of curling vapour flew,
And o'er the Heavens her sable mantle threw,
Reposefully, with slumber on his eyes
He started off to Folly's Paradise ;
Arriving there, he woke without surprise.
All pleased him there ; 't was just as it might be
Within the precinct of his monaṣtery.
Here, in this antique dwelling, met his view
Symbolic paintings, excellently true
Caco the Demon, who this temple graced,
Scribbled at pleasure and its walls defaced ;
Depicting all our follies in burlesque,
Silly exploits, absurdities grotesque
Projects ill-planned and executed ill,
Though praised by monthly paper at its will.

In this strange mass of wonders which confuse,
Amidst impostors, who good sense abuse,
Was drawn a hero, who from Scotland came,
France's new monarch—Law his well known name.
Upon his head a paper crown he wore,
And Scheme was written legibly before,
Great empty wind-bags compass him about,
Which to all comers, he is doling out ;
The priest, the warrior, lawyer and the whore
Bring him their gold, in hopes to make it more.
O what a spectacle! For there too are
“*Sufficient*” Molina, soft Escobar !
And Doucin too, whose little, chubby fist
Extends that bull to be devoutly kissed,
Framed by Le Tellier in such clumsy sort,
That even at Rome it served for secret sport ;
That Bull, which since, the origin has been
Of the disputes and cabals we have seen ;
And what is more, of books profoundly wise
Filled, I am told, with heresies and lies,
All acting on the sense, as poisons chill,
Infusing soporific draughts at will.
These combatants, like new Bellerophons
Chimeras ride instead of stallions ;
With bandaged eyes, they seek their foes around,

And cat-calls shrill supply the clarion's sound ;
And in their holy frantickness of mind
They urge the war with bladders stuffed with wind. *
Ye Gods ! what scribbling then appears to view !
What precepts, orders, expositions too !
Which still explained are and by pedants scanned,
For fear mankind the truth should understand.
O Chronicler of great Scamander's tribe,
Thou, who of yore didst frogs and rats describe !
Who sang so learnedly their combats dire ;
O ! quit the tomb and strike thy frenzied lyre,
To celebrate the fierceness of this war,
Which for the holy Bull extended far.
The Jansenist, by destiny beguiled,
Of *efficacious grace* the ruined child,
A saint Augustin on his banner bears,
For numbers marches and for nothing cares ;
While foes, bent double crawl to the attack,

* Variant: *They urge the war with bladders stuffed*
(with wind.

More than one prelate with devout intent
Sets it beside the Holy Testament ;
Before their eyes, a cohort fierce they find,
Using the same for wiping their behind.
The Ignatian furious, with his soul in flame,
Rushes to save the sacred wisp from shame.

Each riding on a little abbé's back.
O! cease vile discord, nor the land disgrace!
All soon must change, you idiot tribe give place.
A tomb with no rich ornament o'erspread,
Near to St. Medard rears its lofty head,
France to enlighten; heaven above conceals
Beneath this tomb its power, not aught reveals.
Whither the blind his course unsteady wends,
Then stumbling home again, his footstep bends;
The lame appears, a loud *Hosanna* calls,
Halts by the sepulchre, jumps, capers, falls!
The deaf approaches, listens and hears nought,
Anon come others, with vast riches fraught,
True wonder-vouchers, lost in ease and bliss,
The sanctuary of abbé Paris kiss.
Lourdis his large eyes rolls; and, like a clod
Looks on the work, then renders praise to God;
Grins like a fool, and joins the applauding bands,
Well pleased with all, he nothing understands.

Mark well that wise tribunal's sable rows,
Prelates one half, the other monks compose.
Behold the blessed inquisitorial band,
See their unnumbered sbirri round them stand,
Enthroned to judge, each holy doctor wears

For robe the plumage which the screech-owl bears.
Long asses' ears adorn their heads august ;
And well to weigh the just with the unjust,
And try when truth or falsehood most prevails,
They hold a balance with two ample scales ;
One filled, displays the gold by cheating gained,
The wealth and blood from penitents they've drained ;
The other's filled with Oremus and briefs,
Chaplets and Agnuses and bulls and fiefs.
Do you not see, before the doctors sage
Poor Galileo, harassed in old age,
Sueing for pardon in a tone contrite,
Justly condemned for being in the right?

Thy walls, Loudun, with new lit faggots fume !
A curate now the ruthless flames consume.
Twelve rogues doom Urbain Grandier to die,
And bid him roast, condemned of sorcery.
O! dearest Galigai, to fame well known,
Ill treated by the parliament and throne ;
That stupid cohort, venal, insincere,
Consumed thee mid a fire both hot and clear,
For having with the Devil compact made.
How men of sense should be of France afraid!
Where you must pope and hell at once believe,

A *pater* all the learning you receive.
Beyond I see two more decrees authentic
For Aristotle and against emetic.
But come, good Father Girard, 'fore the throne,
For something should be sung of you alone ;
Then hither come, my confessor of maids,
Preacher devout, well versed in double trades.
What say you of the penitential charms,
The tender fair converted in your arms?
'T is not for me at such success to rail ;
We are but men, Girard, and flesh is frail.
You ne'er transgressed 'gainst Nature's sovran laws,
Great devotees are blamed for truer cause.
Yet, my good friend, this I expected not,
To see you mix the devil in your plot.
Girard, O ! Girard, midst the bitter foes,
Whose grievous accusations wrought thy woes ;
Whether or Jacobin or Carmelite,
May try who best can judge, or worst can write ;
Or proffer aid or enmity declare,
There's not a single conjuror, I'll swear !
Lourdis, in fine said our old parliaments
Of some score bishops burn the testaments,
And by decree exterminate the school
Of one Ignatius, a pernicious fool ;

Yet they themselves were in their turn decried ;
Ignatius laughed, though Quesnel deeply sighed !
Paris, disturbed, beheld this fortune's freak,
And solace sought in *Opera-comique*.

O Folly ! fat and foolish deity !
Whose fruitful womb supplies more progeny,
And earth with flocks of fools more amply loads
Than erst Cybele crowded Heaven with Gods !
With what delight thy heavy eyes have scanned
Thy countless children in my native-land.
Compilers stupid and translators dull,
Authors and readers just as thick of skull.
Deign tell me of this idiotic host
Which of thine offspring dost thou cherish most ?
Which are most skilled to write in heavy way,
Most competent to stumble and to bray ?
Behold ! the scribe the most beloved of you,
The author of the *Journal de Trévoux* !

Whilst Denis thus in moon-shine now prepares
'Gainst Britain's sons his inoffensive snares ;
New scenes, that differ wide from these, engage
The fools who tread this sublunary stage.
King Charles to Orléans his march inclined,

His gaudy banners waving in the wind ;
Beside him Joan, with helm upon her head
Vows that to Rheims he shall anon be led.
Ah! see you not the youthful squires advance,
Right loyal Cavaliers, the flower of France ;
With couchèd spear, these nobles, every one,
Respectfully surround the Amazon.

Thus at Fontevraux, woman's rights prevail,
The female sex commanding there the male ;
In madam's grasp, the ruling sceptre's pressed,
And by my Lady Father Anselm's blessed.

Now Agnes, all forlorn, her loss deplored
Abandoned by the prince her soul adored.
Excess of grief o'er nature's force prevailed,
And death-like languor every sense concealed,
Bonneau administered with anxious care
Restoring cordials to the swooning fair ;
She opes her eyes, those eyes so sweet and clear,
Only once more to sigh and shed a tear.
On Bonneau then reclining her fair head,
" 'Tis done, I am betrayed, the lady said.
Where strays he, and what will he undertake ?
His vows and oaths he only meant to break ;
Which were so often sworn, when first he strove

To gain my acquiescence with his love.
Without my lover must I rest at night,
Upon that couch the scene of our delight ;
And yet, that dauntless female Warrior Joan,
Not England's enemy, but mine alone, *
Against me strives to prepossess his mind
Heaven! how I loathe such creatures unrefined,
Soldiers in petticoats, hags turned to knights,
Of the male sex affecting valour's rites ;
Without possessing all the charms of ours,
Of both pretending to usurp the powers,
And who the attributes of neither know."
Speaking she blushed as tears began to flow ;
With rage she trembles and with grief she cries,
The gust of rage shot lightning from her eyes,
When, on a sudden, tender love benign
Instilled into her brain a new design.
To Orléans town anon her course she bent,
With her Dame Alix and good Bonneau went ;

* Variant: *Not England's enemy but mine alone.*
Wearing not only breeches even, nay!
But a large cod-piece, merely for display.
Dressed like a gendarme, Joan of colour dun
Shall henceforth charm him. I shall be undone."
Speaking, *etc.*

Fair Agnes gained an inn, where then at rest,
Slept Joan, who with hard riding had been pressed.
Agnes, till all were sunk to rest remained,
And craftily full information gained,
Where Joan was lying, where her armour lay ;
Then soft approaching, bore with joy away
Chandos' breeches, into which she thrusts
Her tender thighs ; the garment she adjusts ;
In the bright breast plate her fair form arrays ;
The stout steel forged expressly for affrays.
Tears her white skin and bruises all her charms ;
But Bonneau half supports her in his arms.
Then beauteous Agnes in a voice intense :

“O! Love, thou mighty master of my sense!
Endue with strength this little hand so frail,
Grant me to bear this heavy coat of mail,
To better win the author of my bale.
A female warrior now my lord requires,
Make Agnes warlike then for his desires ;
I'll follow him, and grant whate'er betide,
This very day I combat at his side ;
And if toward him war's tempest should be led,
And showers of English darts surround his head,
Let Agnes' sorry charms receive them all,
Let him, at least, be saved by my sad fall !

Let him live happy, so my latest sigh
Be wafted in his arms—content I die !”
Thus the fair prayed, while Bonneau led the way,
Where Charles the King at three miles’ distance lay.
’T was night, yet eager Agnes would depart,
To seek the darling monarch of her heart.
So thus arrayed and sinking neath her weight,
Cursing her arms and wailing her sad fate,
Perched on a horse, to find her love she strayed
Bruised her plump thighs, and her firm buttocks flayed.
Fat Bonneau on a Norman courser proud,
Rode heavy at her side, and snorted loud,
While tender Cupid trembling for the fair,
Saw her depart and sighed with anxious care.

Scarce had sweet Agnes her escape made good
When straight was heard within a neighbouring wood
The noise of horses and the clash of arms
The noise redoubles : lo ! the brave gendarmes
In scarlet clad ; and to increase her pains,
’T was Chandos’ troop which that night scoured the
(plains.

One forth advancing cries : “Who passes there ?”
At this commanding voice, the innocent fair
Thought of the King, and all evasion shed :

" 'T is Agnes, long live Love and France !" she said.
At these two names, which the just power on high,
Wished to unite by the most lasting tie,
Agnes and her fat confident they take,
And lead to Chandos, who, his wrath to slake
Had sworn great vengeance for his honour's sake,
Against the sneaking robbers, who had fled
Stealing his sword and breeches while in bed.

Just as the power beneficent and wise
Dispels the balm of sleep that veils our eyes ;
When tuneful birds begin the matin lay,
And man with strength renewed salutes the day,
When, with rekindled vigour all his fire
Within his bosom glows with love's desire ;
Just then to Chandos was the fair one brought,
The lovely Agnes with each beauty fraught,
Which Phoebus boasts, when rising from the flood ;
Chandos awake ! how flowed thy boiling blood,
When at thy side thou saw'st the fair one sad
Bearing thy sword, and in thy small clothes clad.
The hero, started to renewed desire
Devoured the lady with a look of fire,
And Agnes quaked ; she heard him, muttering, say :
" Anon, my breeches I shall bear away !"

First, on the bolster placing his sweet prize :
“Quit, my fair captive,” said he, “this disguise ;
Cast off these ponderous arms, unfit for thee,
And shine, arrayed in beauty’s livery.”
He ceased, then filled with hope and ardour too
Her helmet and her breast-plate quick withdrew ;
Struggling, the fair defended each bright charm
And blushed, for modesty had ta’en alarm,
Thinking of Charles, but bowed to conqueror’s will.
Bonneau by Chandos destined was to fill,
Within his kitchen the *chef*’s high employ,
And thither instantly he speeds with joy,
Of puddings white, inventor famed was he ;
And O French people! ’t is to him, that ye
Indebted are for eel pies which ye praise,
And that delightful *gigot à la braise*.

Agnes exclaimed in tender, trembling tone,
“Oh, Monsieur Chandos, please leave me alone :
What are you doing? Prithec, Sir, forbear !”
“Ods Zooks! quoth he (all English heroes swear),
Some one hath done me very crying wrong
The breeches, which you wear, to me belong,
And when I find that which by right is mine,
I’ll have it, I protest, by powers divine.”

To argue thus and Agnes to strip nude,
Was the same thing ; the fair one, handled rude,
Wept, struggling in his arms, 'gainst his intent,
"Never," she loud assured him, "I consent !"

Just at this moment a loud din was heard,
To arms ! To arms ! is everywhere the word ;
The trumpet's clamour death's portentous sound,
Called to the charge, and shrilly echoed round.
Joan, when awake, astonished, found no more
Those manly trappings which she lately wore ;
Her helmet shaded by the rich aigrette,
The coat of mail, and eke the huge *braguette*,
Ne'er balancing in doubt, brave Joan anon,
A lowly squire's plain armour buckled on,
Vaulted her winged ass, and loudly cried :
"Come, cavaliers, support your country's pride."
Of knights one hundred straight obeyed her call
Six hundred and eke one score men in all.

From the gay palace where queen Folly reigns,
Lourdis just then alighted 'midst the plains ;
And at that juncture critical appeared
Amongst the British phalanx so much feared.
His bulky figure atoms gross surround,

And on his broad back fooleries abound.
Dull ignorance and works of monks he bore ;
Thus saddled he arrived, and then his store,
Forth from the full robe he contented shook,
And on the British camp dropped every book
Of filthy ignorance, his treasures vast,
Treasures throughout all France profusely cast.
As when of Night the sable deity,
Mounted on spangled car of ebony,
Charms with profoundest sleep our weary eyes,
And all our senses lulls 'midst dreams and lies.

CANTO IV

*Joan and Dunois combat the English — Their adventure
in the Castle of Conculix.*

Were I a King, I'd always justly deal,
Give peace at home, and guard the public weal ;
And every day of my auspicious reign
Should some new benefit or grace attain.
If of Finance I had myself control
I'd give to men of sense ; to men of soul
On every side my bounty I'd accord ;
For, after all they merit due reward.
Or were I an archbishop I would seek
To tame the Jansenist and make him meek ;
But if I loved a young and tender fair
To stay with her would be my constant care,
And every day my love fresh sights should see,
While banished thus dull uniformity,
Her heart I'd keep and she should live for me.
Say, happy lovers, can ye absence bear,
Or safely from your blooming mistress stay ?

Ye risk, alas, if once ye quit the fair,
To be made cuckolds, twice or thrice a day !
Bold Chandos, fired with love and ripe for joy,
With his fair prey had scarce begun to toy,
When through the ranks Joan hurries, in a breath
To scatter blood around and carry death.
With Deborah's so long redoubted lance
She ran through Dildo, foe avowed of France
Who rifled the ripe treasures of Clervaux
And ravished all the nuns of Fontevraux
Next Faulkner worthy of the gibbet, dies,
Struck through the temple and through both his eyes ;
This brazen fellow, bred 'midst fogs and rime,
In the dark regions of Hibernia's clime,
Made love in France, three years, as if at home
Like a spoilt child of Florence or of Rome,
She overturns the great Lord Halifax,
His cousin too, the impudent Borax ;
Midarblou, who his worthy sire denied
And Bartonay who had his brother's bride.
At her example there was not a knight,
A squire or soldier in this bloody fight,
Who did not with his lance run through some ten
Of these redoubted, hardy Englishmen ;
Terror and death preceded their career,

No man but fought divested of all fear ;
Their bosoms glowed with superstitious pride,
For each believed the Lord was on his side.

Amidst this tempest and this bloody brawl,
Lourdis roared out as loud as he could bawl :
"She is a maid, so tremble, England's crew ;
It is Saint Denis, who is armed 'gainst you !
She is a maid and miracles hath wrought,
Against her arm your prowess is as nought.
Quick on your knees, ye scum of Albion fall,
And humbly for her benediction call !"
Fierce Talbot, foaming at the mouth with ire
Seized instantly upon the babbling friar ;
They bound him, yet the monk their rage defied ;
He moved not, but with mouth distended, cried :
"Martyr am I, but, English, ye shall see ;
She is a maid, she'll gain the victory !"
Man's credulous, and by his wavering mind
All is received ; it is a clay refined ;
And like that clay, it readily receives
The strong impression sudden terror leaves.
These words of Lourdis failed not to impart
More dread effect to every soldier's heart,
Than troop heroic and Joan's martial charms,

Aided by courage and their conquering arms,
That instinct old which prodigies believes,
Erroneous sense, which troubles and deceives,
Illusions and chill fear their poisons shed *
And turn the sense of every British head.
Not yet had hardy Britons learned to vie
In deep researches of philosophy,
Most gallant knights were most illiterate ;
And wits reserved to grace a later date.

Full of assurance, Chandos to his band
Exclaimed : "My men, victorious in the land,
Wheel to the right !" The words were scarcely said,
Ere to the left they veered and swearing, fled.
Thus on the plain where famed Euphrates flows,
Presumptuous mortals did of old propose
To exert the utmost stretch of human power
And build proud Babel's heaven aspiring tower,
Till Heaven, which relished their approach no whit,

* Variant: *Illusions and chill fear their poisons shed*
And bring confusion to each English head.
The piercing cries, the clamours they let fall,
The howls of fight, the echoes still recall,
The drum and trumpets' mingled harmony
Deafen the ears of all the company.
Full of assurance, Chandos, to his band, *etc.*

The tongue of man into a hundred split ;
So, when one called for water or for food,
They brought him mortar or a piece of wood,
And this poor people of whom God made fun,
Were fain to part and leave their work undone.

Soon at the ramparts of great Orléans town
Was clarioned of this combat the renown ;
Thither, in winged flight went trumpet Fame,
And spread abroad of Joan the sainted name.
You know our folk's impetuosity,
How honour is their mad idolatry ;
They go to battle just as to a dance !
Dunois, that Mars in Greece might personate
Dunois, so proudly illegitimate,
With Richemont, La Trimouille, Saintrailles, La Hire,
Sally from out the walls devoid of fear,
Presage success, and shout exultingly,
"Where, where are now these dastard enemy?"
They were not far, for near the gate we find
Stout Talbot, hero of capacious mind,
To check French ardour, this bold chief had laid
Ten stout battalions in snug ambuscade.
For one day past, Sir Talbot had aloud
To George (his patron saint) and Cupid vowed

To try each stratagem, essay each art,
Might gain the double object of his heart
Since the fat Louvet's most fastidious dame
With more than friendship met the hero's flame ;
A double wreath he hoped might crown his care,
He'd sack the city and possess the fair.
Scarce through the gate had passed each cavalier
When hardy Talbot fell upon their rear ;
Whereat our French were not surprised at all.
O plain of Orléans ! noble stage though small,
From this brave conflict stubborn on each side,
Flowed human blood that all thy verdure dyed,
Which fattened for an hundred years the ground.
At Zama nor Pharsalia was there found,
Nor could Malplaquet's sanguinary field
For raging Mars a scene more glorious yield ;
No, not e'en those where thousands found a grave
A combat fiercer boasted—feats more brave ;
There, might be seen the mounted knights advance
And into splinters break each shivered lance ;
Riders and palfreys sprawling on the plain.
Remounting straight and to the fight again ;
From clashing swords bright scintillations play
That render doubly luminous the day.
On all sides flew and fell 'mid these alarms

Noses, chins, shoulders, legs and feet and arms.

Angels belligerent, from heavenly height
Looked down with horror at the dubious fight,
Proud Michael and that other by his side
Erst the chastiser of the Persians' pride,
Michael, at length, the doughty balance rears
That counterpoised terrestrial affairs,
Those scales, wherewith mankind is weighed on high,
With steady hand to try the destiny
Of Albion's heroes and the sons of France.
Our knights thus justly poised, such proved the chance,
That Gaul unluckily was light of weight,
Great Talbot was the favourite of Fate ;
Such Heaven's judgment, framed in secrecy
Le Richemont finds himself incontinently
Pierced through the haunch ; Saintrailles upon the knee.
Le Hire was wounded where I dare not say
Alack ! his lady-love will curse the day ;
And La Trimouille could not escape from harm,
Plunged in a bog, he stuck with broken arm.
Thus wounded, back to Orléans were they led
And each, incontinent consigned to bed ;
And may their punishment vain scoffers warn
Never again to treat a saint with scorn.

God can or pardon or condemn, we know
Quesnel has said it, so it must be so,
And that the Bastard should be quite released
From other mockers' fate he now was pleased.
Whilst all the rest, on litters homewards borne,
Maimed and disfigured, their rash conduct mourn,
While each of fortune and of Joan complained,
Our brave Dunois without a scratch remained.
He shot like lightning to the hottest fray,
And through whole British Squadrons hewed his way ;
Until he reached the quarters where the maid
Swept all before her, and great havoc made.
When rapid torrents their full floods unite,
Precipitating from some mountain's height,
Nought can the rage of mingled waves restrain,
They drown the rustic's hopes, deluge the plain.
But direr still were brave Dunois and Joan
When once they met and struck like one alone.
Such was their ardour, chasing England's host,
That soon to their own party they were lost ;
The night-shades fall ; our Bastard and the maid,
Nor French nor Chandos hearing in the glade,
Their converse closing, waved aloft the lance
And halting cried : "For ever flourish France!"

By moonlight, as drear silence reigned around,
A pathway leading through a wood they found ;
Forward they sped, then turned, but all in vain ;
O'ercome with toil and hunger's gnawing pain ;
With searching tired, their palfreys wearied too,
Each 'gan alike the cursed adventure rue.
What use to win, when of no bed they knew ?
Thus the light bark, her sails and compass lost,
Veers round, by Aeolus and Neptune tossed.
A dog just then appeared to our sad pair,
Seeming expressly sent to ease their care ;
He barked, then wagged his tail and straight drew near
And fondled them, without a sign of fear ;
And seemed in his odd dialect to say :
"Follow me, Gentlemen ! This is the way,
Here's board and lodging for you, come away !"
Our heroes by such manners understood
This worthy dog was hither for their good,
Wherefore, with hope for guide, they followed straight,
Praying that France might share propitious Fate,
And lauding each the other's martial soul
Which nought terrestrial could e'er control.
With glance lascivious oft Dunois surveyed,
Spite of himself the beauty of the maid ;
Though well he knew, that Gallia's fate must rest

With that choice jewel which the fair possest,
And ruin absolute had France to fear
If the fair flower was plucked within the year.
He stifled nobly, therefore, his desire
And for the State subdued love's wanton fire ;
Yet ever when a roughness of the ways
The saintly ass to a false step betrays,
Dunois, officious and with ardour warm,
The valiant maid supported with his arm,
While Joan of Arc, and not without a wink,
On his left shoulder lets her head to sink.
Whence it arrived, that as they slowly went
Their lips encountered oft, but with intent
To speak more closely of what might relate
To theirs, or to the glory of the State.

Report hath told me, Konigsmark so fair !
That the twelfth Charles, of humour passing rare,
He who could conquer Kings and love subdue
Ne'er at his brutal court dared suffer you ;
Charles felt and feared to render thee the arms,
And in his caution shunned thy brilliant charms.
But Joan to clasp, and yet not touch the treat !
To sit at table hungry, and not eat !
A score-fold finer victory is to tell.

Dunois was like that Robert D'Arbrisselle,
That Saint who loved to lie at set of sun,
On either side of him, a tempting nun,
To squeeze four limbs and stroke the soft, white skin
Of four plump breasts—succeeding not to sin.
With dawn of day expands before their eyes
A sumptuous palace of tremendous size ;
Reared were the walls of marble white and clear,
There lofty Doric colonnades appear,
Whereon was seen, with porcelain balustrade
A terrace wide of purest jasper made.
Enchanted both beheld this edifice,
Believing they had entered Paradise.
The good dog barks, and twenty trumpets then
Were heard to sound ; and forty serving-men
In doublets gay, with gold and silver bright,
Run to attend the maiden and the knight.
Two youthful pages of a gallant air
Led them within the palace-gate with care ;
Hand-maidens come, and golden baths they try,
Then serve an ample breakfast when they're dry.
So on rich couches, buried in delight
Heroically, from morn they snored till night.
'T is fitting to my readers I record
Who of this sumptuous mansion was the Lord :

This edifice for master owned the son
Of one of those etherial sprights who run
A course eterne through heaven's regions bright,
Whose grandeur oft abandons such delight,
To humanize with our poor, feeble race ;
This spirit, mingling then his flesh divine
With a young nun of Order Bernardine,
Unto this incubus and Dame Alix,
For issue came the noble Hermaphrodix, *
Great wizard, worthy of his parentage.
The day he reached his fourteenth year of age,
From heights above his parent winged his flight,
Crying: "My child, to me you owe the light:
Make known the wishes of your heart, and I
To each and all will speedily comply."
Hermaphrodix, who had from childhood been
Voluptuous, worthy his high origin,
Replied: "My bosom glows with heavenly fires,
I know myself divine by my desires
All pleasures I would taste I must confess,
And glut my soul with hot voluptuousness.
'T is my desire as either sex to love:
Wherefore by night, let me the female prove,

* This name is *Conculix* in the earlier editions of *La Pucelle*.

And with returning day, man's form resume."
The sire replied : "Be such, my son, thy doom!"
Since which the monster has by days and nights
Assumed of either sex the joys and rights.
Thus Plato, who to confidence aspires
With gods, pretends that our primeval sires,
Of pure clay formed and fashioned cunningly,
Were born complete and called Androgynae ;
Each with the power of either sex supplied,
And with inherent virtues satisfied.
Higher than this, Hermaphrodix's lot :
For pleasure that in solitude is got
Is not a destiny divinely fair ;
Better it is companion joys to share ;
And thus celestial bliss in couples taste.
His courtiers vowed as he by turns embraced,
'T was Venus now, performing tender rite,
Now Love, alloying wanton appetite.
In all directions girls they sought to find,
Young, lusty bachelors and widows kind.

But when Hermaphrodix this boon desired
He never asked what was the most required
A gift without which every joy must freeze,

A charming gift, and what? The art to please. *
 For this unruly wish 'twas God's decree
 Uglier than Samuel Bernard, he should be ;
 No conquest ever could his glance command,
 In vain were fêtes dispensed with liberal hand,
 Long banquets, balls, and concerts to invite ;—
 Nay, though he sometimes too would verses write ;
 Yet when, by day, the fair one he would see,
 Or when, at night his female vanity
 Subjected was to some audacious boy,
 Fate still betrayed him, and curtailed his joy :
 Nor aught return could his endearments gain,

* Variant: *A charming gift and what? The art to please.*
 God, this audacious genie to chastise,
 Ugly as Satan made him to the eyes.
 And the foul satyr had beneath his coat,
 An ape's gray hair, and odour of a goat.
 Charmed with himself, what most folks laughter moved
 He thought himself just fashioned to be loved.
 On every side they search him lusty blades
 Bachelors and pages, young and pretty maids.
 And if one dared to thwart this lustful beast,
 Or stopped his nose, because his stomach failed,
 Refused him shameful pleasure in the least,
 Forthwith the wretch was doomed to be impaled.
 Now night had come, Conculix being maid,
 A note was brought in which the lady prayed,
 His excellence the Bastard, not to fail
 To sit at table with her, eat a quail.

Than insult and rebuff, disgust, disdain.
Just Heaven in sadness made him well confess
That grandeur is not always happiness.
"What!" he would cry, "the chamber-maid most vile
Enjoys upon her breast a gallant's smile,
Each ensign to some lovely sempstress runs,
The monks within their cloisters have their nuns,
Whilst I, a genie rich, who grace a throne,
I on this moving orb stand all alone,
Of bliss deprived while others boast a store."
By all the elements anon he swore,
That punishment on either sex he'd deal
Who should refuse for him Love's glow to feel;
And that examples bloody each should share,
The youth ungrateful and the obdurate fair.

As king, he greeted each chance guest, I ween;
Of Sheba, erst the famous, tawny queen,
Talestris, who at Persia's court sojourned,
Presents less costly from those monarchs earned,
Who for each dame confessed himself Love's slave,
Than he to errant knights his largess gave,
To bachelors and every beauteous miss;
But when a restive soul denied him bliss,
Fell short in complaisance he might require

And shunned in trivial point his lewd desire ;
For such affront his anger did not fail,
Alive the poor offender to impale.

The night was come ; and, owning female flame,
Four ushers from my lady's presence came,
Praying our amiable, bold Bastard straight
To come down stairs and have a *tête à tête*,
While squires and ushers in attendance wait
That Joan, in company, might dine in state.
The perfumed Dunois, by this escort led,
The *boudoir* entered where was supper spread,
Such as the sister erst of Ptolemy,
Yielding to every pleasure licence free,
To those illustrious Romans amply gave,
Heroes at once voluptuous and brave,
To Caesar, Antony, with passion drunk ;
Such as myself once shared at board of monk,
Proclaimed the victor o'er each stupid foe,
And dubbed with tonsure Abbot of Clairvaux.
Of such the feast that graced Heaven's conclave blue,
If Ovid and friend Orpheus tell us true,
And brother Homer, Hesiod and Plato,
When the great lord of infidels, you know,
With Semele, supped far from Juno's view,

With Isis and Europa, Danae too ;
With dishes ranged upon the board's divinity,
By the fair hands of soft Euphrosyne,
And of Thalia and Aglai the young
As Graces three, of old so often sung,
Whose law our pedants seldom make their guide ;
Of nectar Hebe served the luscious tide,
And the sweet son of him who founded Troy,
The famed Mount Ida's eagle-wafted boy,
His lord's cup-bearer and his secret joy ;
Such of Hermaphrodix the feast was then
With Dunois shared 'twixt nine o'clock and ten.

Madame with lavish hand had decked her head,
Surcharged the front, with diamonds overspread,
Her yellow neck, and arms of skin and bone
Circled by neck-laces and bracelets shone.
Adorned with precious pearls and rubies bright
She seemed more hideous to the hero's sight.
She gently pressed his hand, the supper o'er ;
He trembled now, who never feared before !
Though famed for courtesy, he in vain prepares
To pay with kind returns his hostess' cares ;
And when her hideous figure caught his view,
He said : "'T is what in honour I should do !"

Yet nothing could—the bravest in such case,
May sometimes suffer similar disgrace.*

* Variant: *May sometimes suffer similar disgrace,*
When *Conculix*, who thought him impotent
Had from her bed the doughty hero sent;
Pronounced the fatal sentence to her men:
“Come hither, sergents, and impale him then!”
Gallant Dunois saw, brought incontinent
All the apparel of his chastisement.
This champion proud, this honour of his time
Sees himself stricken in his life's spring-time.
Him naked quite, within the court they take
And seat him so upon a pointed stake.
Already day's advance guard from afar,
In Orient, had withdrawn night's murky bar.
The very moment when, as 't was arranged
Madame to Monsieur, *Conculix* was changed.
Forthwith, a new flame in his bosom shed,
He makes directly for the Maiden's bed,
Withdraws the curtain, and, you understand,
Preys on her breast with his lascivious hand.
Already with his mouth, the heroic miss
Has been defiled, and his infectious kiss;
His passion makes his hideousness worse.
Joan, who begins a christian wrath to nurse,
Deals him a blow with her strong sinewy arm;
Her clenched fist does his ugly visage harm.
The monster reels and from the bed falls back;
His nose is bleeding and his eyes are black.
He cries, he howls: with sacrilegious aid
His men rush in and promptly seize the maid.
Her haughty cruelty they will abuse
With instruments that men of Turkey use.
From Joan's fair lily form, *etc.*

Hermaphrodix, who keen affliction felt
For Dunois' plight, was almost fain to melt ;
In secret she confessed a keen delight
At the great efforts of the cheerless knight
Nor was he doomed, without reprieve to bleed.
The will thus once was taken for the deed !
Quoth she : "The morrow for a feat so rare,
May offer you revenge. Go and prepare,
That to warm love your cold respect may bend ;
Be ready, Lord ! and better serve mine end."

Already Day's advance guard, from afar
In Orient had withdrawn night's murky bar,
The fates, you know, did to this hour affix
The male mutation of Hermaphrodix.
Burning with new desires he sought the bed
Where tranquilly reposed the doughty maid,
Drew back the curtain, and abruptly pressed,
With hand impertinent, her heaving breast,
Would burning kisses to her lips apply,
And thus attack celestial modesty ;
As vile Hermaphrodix lascivious grew,
More hideous was his person to the view ;
Joan, animated by celestial glow,

With nervous arm inflicts a mighty blow :
Amid my fertile plains, 't is thus I've seen,
One of my mares upon a meadow green,
Unequal spotted of the tiger dye,
Possessing lightsome hoofs, dams bounding high,
With direful and avenging kick reprove
An ass's colt with crupper thus in love,
Which so caressing, grossly in the rear
Thought itself blessed, and high upraised the ear.
That Joan in this was faulty is most true ;
Respectful feelings to her host were due ;
I feel for modesty warm interest,
That virtue ne'er was banished from my breast.
Yet when a prince, or genie full of fire
For ladies' favours marks a strong desire,
When his swoll'n bosom with fond wishes glows,
'T is hard to recompense such warmth with blows.
The son of Alix, though an ugly brute,
Had ne'er met maid dared thus his will dispute.
He cries, guards, pages ; valets in a band,
Arch imps arrive, obedient to command ;
One telling him, the maiden fierce could be
Less cruel to her friend in chivalry.
O Calumny ! thou poison of all courts,
Malicious scandal, slander, false reports ;

Cursed serpents, must your hissing's dire appal
The bliss of lovers, like the court of Gaul?
Our tyrant wronged thus, in a two-fold way,
Resolved upon revenge without delay ;
Pronouncing to his myrmidons thus hailed,
The dreadful sentence : "Let them be impaled."
His words their law, the ready guards prepare
The implements of death with horrid care.
Joan and Dunois, the flower of Chivalry
Are thus condemned in life's gay spring to die.
Naked and bound the fair Bastard they take,
Shortly to seat him on a pointed stake.
And at that juncture, by a troop profane,
To scaffold, proud and beauteous Joan is ta'en,
Her tempting charms and her o'er-hasty blow
To expiate by infamy and woe.
From Joan's fair form the lily shift they tore,
And as she passed her lovely body bore
Stripes from the rods of those who carried her,
And passed her to the executioner.
Not all their rage could Dunois' firmness blast,
Though every hour he thought must prove his last ;
Resigned he oft addressed th'omnipotent,
But when from time to time around he bent
A glance imperious, each was thrilled with dread,

All spoke the hero which he did or said ;
But when Dunois beheld the Pride of France
Avengeress of its lilies, thus advance,
And death prepared for her his soul adored,
Then Fortune's fickleness he first deplored :
His eyes surveyed the graces of the Fair,
And while these men of death the stake prepare,
He wept, to see her like a victim led,
The tears which for himself he scorned to shed.

Equal in charity and just as proud,
Attacks of fear the Maiden ne'er allowed,
On Dunois languidly she cast her eye,
For him alone her great heart heaved a sigh ;
Their youth, their beauty and their nakedness
In their despite, awoke their tenderness.
A flame so constant, so discreet, so brave,
But blazed upon the borders of the grave ;
The animal amphibious, at the sight,
Mingling his jealousy with bitter spite,
Straight to his minions gave the signal dire
That doomed on stakes the couple to expire.
A voice that moment, like the thunder's shock,
Making the earth and airy regions rock,
Cried : "Hold each executioner his hand ;

Impale them not!" These words soon awed the band
The lictors gazed around and then withdrew,
For 'neath the gate a churchman met their view;
Whose cowl and frock, his girdle, sandaled shoon
Announced the reverend father Grisbourdon.
Thus when an hound within the neighbouring wood,
Reared for the chase, with nose both staunch and good,
Scents the fleet hart that courses o'er the lawn,
Roused by the echo of the bugle horn,
The dog runs lightly on the course intent,
Sees not the game, but follows by the scent,
Leaps the wide ditch and clears the hedge by force,
No other stag can then avert his course;
So—Saintly Francis of Assisi's son
Had on the traces of the maiden run,
Borne on his mule, and vowing, come what may,
No other scent should turn him from his way.
Arriving thus, he cried: "Hermaphrodix,
In Satan's name and by the flood of Styx,
And by the demon who has fathered thee,
And by thy mother's book of psalmistry,
Save her who hath my vows and plighted troth;
Behold me, I am come to ransom both.
So if this hero and this maid unskilled
Have not with thee their duty well fulfilled,

I will myself assume the place of two
And prove at once what feats a monk can do.
Nay more, this famous animal you see,
This mule so aptly formed to carry me,
Henceforth he's thine, for thee the beast was made,
Like monk, like mule, both follow the same trade.
Then send this clownish trooper to the wars,
And keep Joan here to soothe our mutual cares.
She is the price—we both demand no more
Than that rare beauty whom our hearts adore. * ”
Joan shuddering, listened to a theme so fell:
Her holy faith, her cherished virgin spell,
Those thrills which love and grandeur's powers impart,
Were than her life, far dearer to her heart.
And Grace besides, of Heaven supremest dole,
Fought even Dunois' self within her soul.
She weeping, to High Heaven her pangs disclosed,
And blushed, that naked she was thus exposed ;

* Variant: *Than that rare beauty whom our hearts adore.*
Hardly a woman, so it seems to me,
However set on her Virginity,
But in such case had breathed an easier breath:
But Joan the maiden, she had rather death.
And this infernal and lascivious aid
Seemed but a thing of horror to the maid.
She weeping to high Heaven, *etc.*

From time to time her eye-lids shut would be,
Nought seeing, she believed that none could see.

Despair, meanwhile, o'ercame Dunois the brave,
"What!" he exclaimed, "shall this uncloistered knave,
Assisted by his impious arts alone,
Ruin my country and possess my Joan?
When I, condemned unheard-of ills to prove,
In modest silence hid till now my love!"
Of Grisbourdon, the offer thus polite
On the five senses of the infernal spright
A good effect produced; he calmed his ire,
And well content, exclaimed: "'T is my desire
You and your mule tonight both ready be;
I pardon—set those French at liberty."
The friar gray possessed old Jacob's wand,
The ring that graced of Solomon the hand,
His clavicule, and the famed baton which
Sewed Pharoah's sorcerers as a magic switch,
And that same besom whereon rode of old
The toothless sorceress of Saul the bold,
When to that prince of kings imprudent most
At Endor once she summoned up a ghost.
The monk, who much as any of them knew,
First with his slender wand a circle drew,

Then backwards o'er his beast some ashes threw,
Repeating words with magic instance fraught,
By Zoroaster to the Persians taught.
At these big words, in Satan's language said,
(O power supreme! Marvel unparaelled!)
Our mule upon his hindmost legs uprose,
His oblong head, a rounder semblance chose,
His stiff black bristles little locks became,
But 'neath his cap his ears were still the same.
So in old times, that emperor so grand,
Whose proud obduracy by God's command,
Was punished by condemning him to pass
Seven years an ox, and feed upon the grass;
Yet when the guise of man anew he bore,
He proved no better than he was before.

From the blue summit of the vaulted sky,
Denis regarded with a parent's eye,
The piteous state of our afflicted Joan,
And willingly had to her succour gone,
But troubled was the saint and full of care,
His journey thither proved a bad affair;
Bold George, of England was the patron saint,
Against Saint Denis he had lodged complaint,
Of having without orders gone too far

Against his Britons thus declaring war.
'Twixt Denis and Saint George, high words arose,
Spurred to the quick, they almost came to blows ;
A British saint has in his character
A certain something, harsh and insular :
The nature of our soil holds strong control,
In vain may rest in Paradise the soul,
All is not pure, provincial accents still
At princes courts can not be dropped at will.

Reader, 't is time I pause a little here,
Since I must furnish out a long career,
My breath is short ; yet I were fain to sing
This wondrous business's unravelling,
What Joan performed, and what to all befell
Upon the Earth, in Heaven, and e'en in Hell.

CANTO V

*The Cordelier Grisbourdon who sought to ravish Joan is
justly consigned to Hell, where he relates his
adventures to the Devils.*

Oh, let us keep the Christian path in view !
'T is the best scheme, believe me, to pursue ;
Each must at length his bounden duty own ;
As for myself, in youth my mind was prone
To stews ; and oft I loved the dance to grace,
Ne'er casting thought upon the Holy place,
Supping and sleeping with the nymphs of love,
And mocking those who serve the powers above.
What happens then? Death, fatal Death appears
With his flat nose, and his sharp scythe uprears,
And cuts quite short the *bons mots* of the wits ;
The ardent fever, with unequal fits,
Bailiff of Atropos, ascendant gains ;
Daughter of Styx she wrecks the puny brains.
At the bed-side the nurse and lawyer stay,
Crying : "The time is come, you must away !

Where would you, Gentleman, your bones should lay?"
As tardy issues the repentant breath,
Still lingering to proclaim its wish in Death;
Some call Saint Roch, Saint Martin to their aid,
Another to Nitouche devoutly prayed,
One singeth psalms, or Latin groans with pain,
They sprinkle holy water, all in vain.
At the bed's foot the evil one displays
His hungry fangs till soul from body strays;
Then carries it to depths profound of Hell
Fit sojourn for perversities to dwell.

'T is time, dear reader, I should now record,
How Satan of infernal realms the lord,
To all his vassals banquet gave in state;
His hellish mansion-house was all in fête:
A vast recruiting had of late been made,
And demons quaffed to brethren of the trade,
A well known pope, a cardinal with a paunch,
A Northern king, and fourteen canons staunch,
Intendants three, and lazy monks a score,
Trios of councillors to swell the store,
All from the mortal places freshly sent
The stoves that burn below to supplement.
The horned King his black imps shouting hears,

And yields to mirth, surrounded by his peers.
Tipsy with that infernal nectar strong,
They sit and roar a hellish drinking-song,
When at the gate a sudden cry is heard :
"Good day—arrived—what here !" was straight the word,
"Brothers, 't is he, the envoy whom we send ;
'T is Grisbourdon, our very faithful friend,
Welcome, great Grisbourdon, our ally tried,
Come in and warm yourself by our fire-side ;
Doctor of Lucifer, great Grisbourdon,
Hell's high apostle, and our Satan's son."
Then was he hugged, caressed and kissed by all,
And led triumphant to the festive hall.

Satan arising, cried : "O Hell-born child !
Pride of all debauchees, by sin defiled,
Thus soon I did not hope thy face to see,
On earth thou hast so useful been to me.
Who more than thee made realm populous?
Through thee France was a seminary for us ;
For while in Gaul, thou gavest sin full scope :
To view thee here extinguishes my hope ;
But fate's omnipotence we can't command,
So drink and set thyself at my right hand."
The cordelier with saintly horror kneels.

Kisses the gaffs on his great master's heels ;
Then rising sorrowfully, casts his sight
On the dire regions of eternal night ;
Dire realms of fire, wherein for ever rest
Death, crimes and those by torments fell opprest ;
Eternal throne on which the fiend was hurled,
Abyss immense which swallows up the world ;
Entombing hoar antiquity so sage,
Love, talent, wit, grace, beauty, every age,
That crowd unnumbered and immortal crew,
True heaven-born race, but, Satan! made for you.
You know, my reader, in the flames of Hell,
The best of kings with the worst tyrants dwell.
Aurelius there, there Antonine we place,
And Trajan, model of each princely grace,
The gentle Titus, by mankind revered ;
Two Catos, who as plagues of vice appeared ;
Scipio, who well against temptation strove,
Who conquered Carthage, and who conquered Love.
There too you broil, learned and wise Plato,
Homer divine and eloquent Cicero ;
You Socrates, the child of sapiency,
Martyr of God mid Greece's profanity ;
Just Aristides, virtuous Solon, giv'n
All to the flames because they died unshriv'n.

But greater far was Grisbourdon's surprise,
When midst the glowing coals he cast his eyes
On king and saints, who graced a former age,
Renowned in legends and the historic page.
The first he saw was Clovis, our good king!
Start not, O Reader, for the truth I sing.
Much may you marvel, that a king so wise
Who pointed out the path of Paradise
To all his subjects, should forsake the road,
Nor see the great salvation he bestowed.
Who'd think the first of Christian kings must die,
Damned like a Pagan to eternity?
But Reader, thou wilt call to mind I'm sure
That being washed in font with water pure,
Cannot from soul corrupt efface the stain,
And Clovis was so linked in vice's chain,
Within his breast an heart so direful beat,
Of bloody deeds inhuman 't was the seat,
Therefore Saint Remi strove to cleanse in vain
From Gallia's king the black and gangrened stain.

Amongst these great ones, sovereigns of the world
Promiscuously into darkness hurled,
Appeared famed Constantine, at sight of whom
Our monk in gray, astonished at his doom,

Exclaimed aloud: "O Lord, O cruel fate!
Can this be true? What he! who shone so great!
This hero who first made the world obey
The Christian creed and chased false gods away!
Is he alike subdued to Satan's yoke?"
When to the monk, thus Constantine bespoke:
"The worship of false gods I overturned,
And on the ruins of their temples burned
Incense to God above, with hand profuse,
But in such show external what's the use?
My cares for the supreme, though none could see,
Were not for Heaven, they centred all in me;
The holy shrines were but a stepping-stone
In my intention to the Caesar's throne.
Ambition, madness, mundane joys I made
My Gods, to whom my sacrifice I paid;
While Christian blood and treasure freely poured
Cemented fortune and my state secured.
To guard this throne, so idolized through life
I murdered next the father of my wife;
In blood and pleasure plunged, my jealous mind,
Where madness, weakness, cruelty combined,
Drunken with love, and to distrust a prey
Hurried to death my queen and son away;
O, Grisbourdon, no more astonished be,

That Constantine should be as damned as thee! *”
Still more and more the Cordelier admires

* *V a r i a n t: That Constantine should be as damned as thee!*”
Besides the emperor, Roman kings a score,
Well-viewed in Rome will burn for evermore.
The Pope may well, to give them their reward
Write them in red in his renowned record,
Witness for them, that they may honoured be.
The Devil laughs at his superb decree.
As each has lived, his doom to each he reads,
And each is judged according to his meeds,
Roasted or boiled as though he were a swine.
Laughing aloud at emperor Constantine,
The cordelier in Latin of the worst,
Pays him his compliments, then, as at first,
Goes on his way and more and more admires
The secrets veiled in Pandemonium's fires.
In the same rank with others of no worth,
Though honoured fulsomely upon the earth,
And justly now devoted to the flames,
The reverend friar as he passes, names
Louis, the flower of the patron-flock,
Saint Louis, father of the Bourbon stock.
He cursed the cruel madness which induced
Him, by a gloomy fanatic seduced,
To leave alone, to her unhappy life,
Without a gallant, his most beauteous wife,
For Turkish Syria to march within
And massacre the hapless Sarrazin.
This bigot King, with chivalry gone mad,
Who in high heaven had earned a sojourn glad,
If to be Christian he were but content,
Fried now below, and earned his punishment;
A pious man, though no more, to my view,

The secrets veiled in Pandemonium's fires.
He views on all sides learned preachers there,

He took the imitation for the true,
Of grace had sup'rabundance to the last,
And far beyond the ten commandments passed;
He scourged himself, he wore a shirt of hair,
Drank water pure and lived on sorry fare;
Of *bisque* and ortolans he never ate,
Pheasant nor partridge never graced his plate;
On a hard bed, he oft watched night turn day,
Whilst the cruel scourge was never far away.
Faith! The poor king had better far employ
His hours at home with Margoton to toy.
The worst of all the roads to Hell to come
In my opinion's that of martyrdom.
This innocent in good works did abound
As many a score of pious pilgrims found;
And so was added to the saintly ring.
Yet no remorse he ever felt to bring
The bitter fruit of war through all the lands,
And sow red ruin with his pious hands;
With death and all the woes of indigence
He devastated and impoverished France;
Orphans and widows scattered there broadcast;
What devil ever greater harm compassed?
Grisbourdon saw him, but he nothing said.
Further he saw, where fiercest flames were shed
A simmering crew of learned preachers there,
Doctors and those who filled the casuist's chair,
Right wealthy prelates, bigot monks of Spain,
Italian nuns and to increase the train,
Of every King the confessor was seen;
Ghostly advisers of the fair, I ween,
Whose Paradise mid mundane joys was past,
In dormitory somewhat overcast.

Doctors and those who filled the Casuist's chair ;
Right wealthy prelates, bigot monks of Spain

Upon the hearth, before the fire that surged,
From a huge pot a head just then emerged ;
A mighty felt, cone-shaped, the head disguised ;
Ferocious Calvin the friar recognized.
With both his eyes in his two hands' default,
At brother Luther he made fierce assault ;
Then atrabilyously his gaze he turned,
Upon a Roman pontiff he discerned.
Easy to tell that haughty sectary
With evil heart and mind of bigotry,
And jealous soul a tyrant well might grace ;
Even as he cooked, he still seemed in his place ;
(That town by every gallant man eschewed,
And all whom old wives' tales have not imbued)
Watching the flames Servetus ill intreat,
Just enemy, though somewhat indiscreet
Of paternoster and of Holy Writ,
And hated rival whose worst crime was wit
To reason better than the other might ;
Calvin, his eyes all full of envious night,
Seemed still that Nivernais to hear and see
Imploring pardon, on his bended knee,
That silly priest, in frippery arrayed,
The cherished darling of the chamber-maid
Who much preferred the gentle Genevese
To the good dames of country Champenese.
Go hang, go hang ! the rascal seemed to cry
Who kisses, in my law, sins mortally ;
And at my law no Huguenot shall sneeze ;
So, by my troth ! this chamberer shall die,
For having had a greater joy than I.
The Cordelier, in voice most thunderous,
(Nor was his gaze, withal, less furious)

Italian nuns, and to increase the train
Of every king the confessor was seen ;
Ghostly advisers of the fair I ween,
Whose Paradise' mid mundane joys was past,
In dormitory somewhat overcast.
He next perceives enrobed, half black and white,
A monkish form, whose hair appeared to sight
A circle raised ; but when his pious mien,
By fierceness marked our Cordelier had seen,
He, laughing, could no more his thoughts keep in,
But softly said : "This man's a Jacobin."
Then sudden cried : "Thy name I fain would learn."
When melancholy thus the shade in turn,
To his interrogator made reply :
"Alas, my son ! Saint Dominic am I !"

Our Cordelier some paces back retired,
To hear this name august, on earth admired ;

Said to him : "Rogue, by what right, when above
Dared'st thou the punishment of happy love?
Who gave into thine hands the cruel rod
With which thou scourg'dst each zealous child of God,
Who peace to families with view to bring
Took up the task of maiden's comforting?
Such was the wretch the worthy monk assailed,
That for a little more he had not failed,
To treat the holy man in that rough mode
Which at Geneva is well understood.
He next perceived, *etc.*

Then crossed himself, for he could not believe:
"How!" he exclaimed, "and shall this gulf receive
A saint, a doctor and apostle too?
Thou, great promoter of the monkish crew,
Preacher evangelic, inspired by God,
Bend'st thou, an heretic, 'fore Satan's rod?
Can grace so sadly, inefficient prove?
Poor mortals! how ye are deceived above!
Go, and perform your ceremonies quaint,
And sing the litanies of every saint."

Whereto replied, with feelings on the rack,
The dolorous Spaniard, in his white and black:
"No more the vanities of man discuss,
What is the hubbub of their crimes to us?
Cursed and tormented here, why care a jot
For psalms and praises sung where we are not?
Many who roast here, in these realms of night,
On earth are honoured with a chapel bright,
While with impunity, by men are cursed
Victims on earth, who rank in Heaven the first.
For me I suffer by a most just hand
For persecuting the poor Albigeois land;
My mission to convert, not to condemn,

I'm roasted here for having roasted them! * ”
Oh, was I gifted with an iron tongue
That wagged for ever, still would ne'er be sung,
My gentle reader, still I could not tell
Of all the Saints, who have abode in Hell.
When the black cohort of the sons of woe
Had done the honours of the realms below,
As with one voice, they, all of them constate,
“ 'T is Brother Grisbourdon who must relate,
What has conduced to his so sudden end:
What direful accident? recount, good friend!
Retail the deed that hurled thy hardened spright,
Thus fathoms deep amid chaotic night?”
“ Good sirs, your will, he answered, I'll obey,
And my adventure strange will straight display,
But if what I recount excites surprise,
Oh! let me still find favour in your eyes;
Since, when we're dead, we dead no more in lies!

“ I was, you know, apostle yours, above,

* Variant: *I'm roasted here for having roasted them.*
Not that my condemnation is for aye!
I hope to find myself on some far day,
With all the saints, in highest sanctity;
In the meanwhile, I suffer Purgatory.
O, was I gifted, etc.

And for my habit's honour and your love,
I did as gallant, and as doughty deed,
As ever monk performed, from cloister free'd.
The noted animal, my muleteer,
O wondrous man ! in all things my compeer,
Most dutiful, he gave his powers such scope
As to surpass Hermaphrodix's hope,
I, without vanity, had strove amain
The female monster's plaudits to obtain,
Till Alix's daughter did, quite ravished, own
For once, she was content, and gave up Joan.
Joan, the rebellious, Joan of nought afraid,
Was soon to lose the envied name of maid ;
Already circled in my steady arms,
She struggled stoutly for her virgin charms,
The muleteer beneath, our damsel pinned,
The while Hermaphrodix, delighted, grinned.

“But will ye credence to my story yield,
The air op'd wide, when from that azure field,
Called Heaven—(a place which neither you nor I
Shall ever see—ye know the reason why)
I saw descending, O most fatal stroke
The long-eared beast that once to Balaam spoke,
When Balaam bold would o'er the mountain pass ;

O direful messenger! Terrific ass!
A velvet saddle on his back he bore
And from his saddle-bow, hanging before,
Suspended, was a trenchant sabre seen,
With ample blade and either edge most keen;
Two wings upon his shoulders were combined
Wherewith he flew, and far outstripped the wind."
When Joan perceived what thus had come to pass,
"Praised be the Lord!" she cried: "behold mine ass!"
At these her words, I shrunk benumbed with fear!
The long-eared animal in haste drew near,
And bent before Dunois on suppliant knee,
As if he wished to say, "pray mount on me!"
Dunois obeys, the animal takes flight,
And rears and prances overhead, dire sight!
While mounted Dunois, with his glittering blade,
Prepares to charge on wretched me, afraid:
Just as 't is said, O Satan, my liege Lord!
When with Omnipotence you vainly warred,
Archangel Michael met you fatally;
Fell instrument of vengeance heavenly.

"Thus forced my threatened carcass to defend,
I courted magic as my surest friend.
The heavy brows and self-sufficient pride

That marked the cordelier I cast aside:
Assumed the charming form and blushing air
Of a young damsel, gentle, fresh and fair.
Tresses of flaxen hue adorned my breast,
Mine ivory skin a gauze transparent pressed,
Through which transpired, the warrior to deceive,
A bosom thrilled by love's convulsive heave;
All graces of the female sex were mine,
I strove to give my look a glance divine,
All spoke that innocence which charms the view,
Ever deceiving as its wiles subdue.
And though mine outward parts such candour showed,
A certain languor, so voluptuous glowed
With such enticing warmth through every part,
It must have softened the most savage heart.
I could have ta'en the wary by surprise,
And have seduced to folly the most wise,
Since all was mine that could ensure success,
Thus doubly armed with beauty and finesse.
My knight incontinent confessed the charm,
One moment more I'd fallen 'neath his arm,
For in his grasp upreared, the glittering steel,
Now half descending was my fate to seal,
And trembling Grisbourdon, with pallid hue,
Already thought his skull was cleft in two.

Dunois beholds, is moved, his hand he stays :
Thus seen, Medusa's head in ancient days,
The gazer changed into the senseless rock ;
But gallant Dunois felt far different shock,
His soul was made a prisoner through his eyes,
I saw him drop his sabre in surprise.
I saw my charms produce their full effect,
He burned with passion tempered with respect.
Who then had thought my victory could fail ;
But lo ! here comes the worst part of my tale.

“The muleteer, who, urged by passion's flame,
Pressed in his arms of Joan the sturdy frame.
Beholding me, so lovely and so sweet,
Sudden was taken with a new conceit :
Alas ! my heart no thought had entertained
That he by tender charms could be enchained—
A boorish mind inconstancy to own !
I was preferred, and straight he left alone
The direful Joan—a fatal fair to me :
No sooner Joan enjoyed her liberty,
When, lo ! her eye enquiring, so it chanced ;
On Dunois' lately fallen sabre glanced ;
She seized the steel, just as the faithless hind
Joan's peerless charms for mine had left behind,

And at that moment, aiming one back blow,
Severed my collar-bone and laid me low.
Since then I've had occasion none to hear,
Of cruel Joan, or of the muleteer,
Whether the monster or the ass prevailed ;
May they be all, a hundred times impaled !
And may kind Heaven, which sounds the sinner's knell,
Send the whole company forthwith to Hell !”

Thus spoke the monk, concluding angrily ;
Whereat the hosts of Hell laughed mightily.

CANTO VI

*Adventure of Agnes and Monroe — The Temple of
Fame — The Tragical Episode of Dorothy.*

Let us quit Hell ! quit the abyss impure
Leave Grisbourdon with Lucifer to burn ;
Wing to the realms of day our flight secure,
And to the busy scenes on earth return !
That Earth alas ! which is another Hell,
Where innocence no longer dares to dwell,
Where hypocrites make good appear as bad ;
Where sense, refinement, taste are run stark mad,
While all the virtues, being led astray,
Have joined the party, and are flown away,
There empty policy, as weak as loud,
Takes the first place, the one desert allowed.
Wisdom must yield to superstition's rules,
Who arms with bigot zeal the hand of fools ;
And interest, earth's king, for whom the trade
Of peace and war by potentates was made,
Pensive and sad beside its coffer dwells,
And to the stronger's crimes the weaker sells.

O wretched, guilty, senseless mortals, why
Your souls debase with crimes of such a dye?
Unhappy men! who void of pleasure, sin,
Be wise at least, when you the course begin,
And since you needs must to damnation speed,
Be damned for pleasure, 't is the wisest deed.

Oft Agnes Sorel would this precept prove,
Whom none could blame except for sins of love.
On her forgiveness I with joy bestow,
And trust that God will equal mercy show:
Not maiden, every saint of Paradise,
And penitence the virtue is of vice.

When, in defence of honour, Joan was led
To sever with her heavenly sword the head
Of Grisbourdon, our winged ass, whose flight
Bore through the air Dunois, the gallant knight,
Conceived the thought, profane caprice I own,
To bear the hero far away from Joan.
What was it urged the wish? Love's ardent fire—
Love's tenderest flame, the soul's new-born desire.
Another time, kind reader, shall be told
The ardent fancy and the notion bold
That 'gan the Arcadian hero to uphold.

The holy animal resolved to fly
Towards the plains of pleasant Lombardy.
Good Denis had so counselled it, indeed,
This escapade unto his winged steed,
Wherefore, you ask?—Because he read each thought
Wherewith his ass and Dunois' breast was fraught;
Each burned with wishes that would, soon or late
Have proved subversive of the realm and state,
Have hurled destruction on the Gallic throne,
And marred the fortune and the fame of Joan.
Absence and time the saint conceived would prove
Sufficient to dispel their dawning love!
Denis had further views in this affair,
Another aim, a second pious care:
Abstain then, Reader, from all rash complaints,
And view with reverence the acts of Saints!

The ass celestial, Saint Denis' pride
On Loire's fair banks no longer would abide,
Made straight toward the Rhone, while in his fright.
Dunois could scarce sustain that dizzy flight.
From high above, his Heroine he beheld;
Naked she was, a sword her fingers held,
While her breast swelling with celestial ire
Through streams of blood gave proofs of sainted fire.

Hermaphrodix her flight would fain impede,
His myrmidons could not effect the deed ;
In vain the cohort would her course withstand,
Joan humbles all with her courageous hand :
As when some giddy youth in forest sees
The waxen palace of industrious bees,
Admires the labour, and with daring strives
To pry still closer in the sugared hives ;
Forth, on a sudden, bursts the winged race,
And settle fiercely on the intruder's face,
Who, by their stings assailed in every part,
Screams, runs and plunges to evade the smart ;
Strikes, scatters, crushes hundreds 'neath his feet,
Of these winged hoarders of each luscious sweet.
'T was thus with dauntless Joan, who chased afar
This puny phalanx, apeing men of war.

Now at her feet, the caitiff muleteer,
Dreading the same fate as the Cordelier,
Trembles and cries, "O maiden, O my fair !
Whom once to serve in stable was my care,
What fury urges thus thy bosom's strife ;
Have mercy, spare at least my wretched life,
Let not thine honours change thy clemency ;
Behold my tears, O Joan ! in truth, I die !"

Whereto the maid replied: "I yield thee grace;
 Thy recreant blood shall not my sword disgrace;
 Vegetate still, and let thy clumsy mass
 This very instant, serve me as an ass:
 For though to mule, I can not change thy frame
 Thy figure matters not; 't is just the same;
 Dunois has got mine ass, so I'll take thee,
 Or man or mule, you are a mount for me,
 Crouch then, directly!"—Quick the brute obeyed,
 Submissive stooped his old and clumsy head,
 Went on all-fours, whilst Joan his back bestrode,
 And to face Heroes off the Heroine rode.*
 The genie swore by his ethereal sire
 Frenchmen should henceforth feel his ceaseless ire.
 His bitter thoughts inclined towards Britain's race,
 And in this just revenge, he swore to efface
 His wrongs on any Gaul whose sorry fate
 Should lead him to encroach on his estate.
 Forthwith was reared a castle at his will
 Of structure strange, new architectural skill,
 A trap, a labyrinth wherein might fall

* Variant: *And to face Heroes off the Heroine rode.*
 Disgraced *Conculix*, full of angry pain,
 Went to search out his father and complain.
 Yet soft we'll now recur, etc.

The noblest heroes of this hated Gaul.

Yet soft we'll now recur to Agnes' state ;
Dost thou not call to mind her cruel fate,
As when, quite senseless, Chandos sinewy arms
Entwined with rapture all her naked charms?
This same John Chandos at the martial cry
Left love and Agnes for the enemy ;
Who, thus abandoned to her own sweet will,
Conceived she had escaped the threatened ill.
Scarcely recovered from the peril past,
She made a vow that it should prove the last ;
And swore to love but good King Charles alone,
Who loved her better than he loved his throne,
And die ere tarnish once her faith so fair ;
All this was wrong, for ladies should not swear.

Amidst this crash of foes, formed to astound,
From camp attacked inseparable sound,
Where officers and soldiers join the fray,
Some fighting hard as others run away ;
While coward lackeys, marching in the rear,
Plunder the baggage through excess of fear.
Mid fire and smoke and yells of the distress,
Agnes, perceiving she was quite undrest

To noble Chandos' ward-robe instant hied,
With fitting raiment there to be supplied ;
And having seized on robe and shirt to boot,
Even his night-cap to complete the suit,
Silent and tremblingly she bent her way,
When lucky chance produced a dappled bay,
Bridled, and with a saddle on its back ;
Of doughty Chandos t'was the attendant hack.
A squire, an aged sot of courage bold,
Dozing, kept station there the steed to hold ;
The wary Agnes stealthily there crept,
And took the bridle from the squire who slept.
Uttering harsh sounds suspicion to defeat,
She sprang with martial prowess to the seat,
Clapped spurs and t'wards a forest bends her way,
While joy and fear usurp alternate sway.
Bonneau endeavoured to stump off the while,
And cursed his heavy paunch at every mile
Damned this fine journey, courts and wars' alarms,
The English nation, love and Agnes' charms.

Meanwhile, of Chandos the most faithful page,
(By name Monroe, such was the personage)
As early home with diligence he hied
From far his master's gown and night-cap spied :

Divining ill the cause of this strange sight,
Firmly believed his lord was put to flight.
Astonished at a scene so wondrous new
Monrose whips hard his loved lord to pursue ;
Crying: "My Lord, my master, halt and say,
Are you pursued? Can Charles have won the day?
I'll follow you, where'er your course you bend,
One common fate my days and yours shall end."
He spoke and flew, as if the winds conveyed
Him and his horse as well as what he said.
Agnes, conceiving some pursuer near,
Entered the wood, appalled with chilling fear ;
Monrose still followed, and the quicker she
Strove to escape the quicker galloped he ;
The palfrey stumbled, and the fainting fair
Wafting a shriek that echoed through the air,
Fell lifeless by her panting courser's side,
In all the liveried hues of terror dyed.
Swift as the wind arriving, Monrose stared,
For at the sight his wondering wits were scared ;
As 'neath his master's robe, then floating wide
The lovely charms of Agnes he descried : *

* Variant: *The lovely charms of Agnes he descried :*
An alabaster bosom and such thighs
As Love might have designed the shape and size.
Favoured Adonis, etc.

Bosom of snow, and beauty *sans* compare,
Which bounteous nature lavished on the fair.

Favoured Adonis, such was thy surprise
When the beloved of Mars forsook the skies ;
What time the condescending queen of love,
Offered to bless thee in the conscious grove.
Venus, there's little doubt was better 'rayed,
Her lovely frame fatigue had not essayed ;
No decent vestments did her body lack,
Nor had she tumbled from a palfrey's back ;
Her ivory buttocks had felt no sharp thorn,
Nor did a night-cap her fair brows adorn ;
Yet had our Agnes met Adonis' view,
His choice had surely wavered 'twixt the two.
The British youth immediate felt the smart,
Respect and fear by turns subdued his heart ;
Trembling, he raised the fair one in his arms
Then cried : "The shock hath wounded sure these
 charms."

Upon him Agnes turned her languid eyes,
And then exclaimed, in broken faltering sighs :
"Whoe'er thou art that hast my course pursued,
If thou be not with innate crime endued,
Take no advantage of my hapless state,

To guard mine honour be it now thy fate ;
O save me, give me freedom !" Agnes sighed,
Nor words spoke more, for words were then denied ;
She turned away her face in silent grief,
And found a melancholy, short relief
In promising that, come what might, she'd be
True to her royal lover steadfastly.
Monrose in silence sympathized a while,
At length in accents soft, with gentlest smile,
"O thou! by nature framed to bear the sway,
Illuming hearts with thy celestial ray,
Behold thine humblest slave—on me rely,
For you alone I'll live, or dare to die.
Accept my service, my fond cares approve ;
'T is happiness to succour what we love !"
Then forth he drew a flask of *Eau des Carmes* ;
And bathed, with timid hand, those injured charms
The saddle or the cruel fall had bruised,
Where rose and lily their soft tints confused.
Fair Agnes blushed, yet felt no undue rage,
Nor checked the hand of the adventurous page,
Nor well knew why she stole the side-long glance,
Still swearing faith to royal Charles of France.
The page, his bottle soon exhausted, cries :
"Rare beauty! let thy faithful swain advise

To take yon devious path, whose windings meet
A neighbouring hamlet's safe and calm retreat,
Retreat which no fierce warriors possess,
Accessible within an hour—or less.
Money I have—Oh, let it serve to pay
For petticoat and cap thy form to ray ;
To deck in decency and elegance
A beauty worthy of a king of France."

The lady-errant this advice approved
So soft Monrose, so worthy to be loved ;
So handsome he, so tender, so well-bred,
The fair was not unwilling to be led.
Some cynic here, perhaps, may check my tale,
Demanding how it chanced a page should fail ;
This youthful Englishman, so full of blood,
Should near a mistress prove so passing good,
And no improper conduct e'er betray ?
Be peaceful, thou censorious babbler, pray,
The stripling loved, and if mere gallantry
Makes bold, true love begets timidity.

Monrose and Agnes, towards the hamlet move,
Now make fine speeches, now converse of love,
Of war's exploits, and feats of chivalry,

And old romances stuffed with gallantry.
Our squire, at every hundred steps would stand,
Approach the fair, and kiss her lily hand,
All with an air of such respectful love,
'T were vain in beauteous Agnes to reprove;
But nothing more—the gentle youth enslaved,
Though much desiring, nothing further craved.
The lovely pair, the hamlet once within,
The squire conducts the beauty to an inn:
When lovely Agnes quitting fond Monrose,
Seeks modestly in bed desired repose.
Now, out of breath, the page runs round and buys
Such food and raiment as the place supplies;
Whate'er or ease or comfort could impart,
To the dear idol of his doating heart.
Sweet youth in whom honour with love combined!
'T was all his joy to let them sway his mind.
Where are they found, whose studied arts compare
With thy soft blandishments and gentle care?

At this same Inn (it cannot be denied)
John Chandos' almoner lodged close beside;
And every almoner in every age,
In impudence surpasseth every page.
No sooner doth this wicked churchman hear,

How such transcendent beauty sleeps so near,
Than lewd desire inflames his heated blood,
Swells each distending vein, a madding flood,
Fires his foul body, flashes from his eyes,
Till to her room in rage of lust he flies,
And like a madman, as he enters, swears,
Makes fast the door, and the two curtains tears.

But, gentle reader, it is meet I tell,
What likewise at this point of time befell
Our brave Dunois, long borne through air, alas!
Far from brave Joan, by her unruly ass.
Where hoary Alps their snow-crowned summits rear,
Divide the clouds, and seek a purer air;
Where yielding rocks to Hannibal supplied,
That passage fatal to the Roman pride;
Where bending skies describe an azure bow,
While blackening tempests breed and roll below;
A palace of transparent marble stands,
No roof, no door, the wondrous pile commands,
Open on every side and free to all;
Unnumbered mirrors grace the interior wall,
That thro' this structure, whosoe'er shall pass,
Reflected in some faithful looking-glass,
Or passing old, or young, or fool or fair

His veritable face is figured there.

A thousand paths conduct by divers ways
To this bright Empire, where such numbers gaze ;
But awful precipices hang in view,
And fraught with danger is each avenue.
This new Olympus many have attained,
Unconscious how the glorious heights they gained :
Yet few, indeed, the wished-for goal attain,
For one who mounts, there are a hundred slain.
The mistress of this palace perched so high,
Is that same old and prating Deity,
Called Fame, to whom since suns have light displayed
Even modesty hath gentle tribute paid.
The sage affects, 't is true, a proud disdain,
And treats the triumphs of renown as vain,
Declares no poison to the soul like praise :
Wherein he lies, and folly what he says.

Fame then is stationed on this giddy height,
To pay their court her minions take delight ;
Kings, warriors, pedants, churchmen too are there,
Vain multitude ; puffed up with nought but air ;
On bended knee, each supplicates and cries :
"O Fame ! most puissant goddess, ever wise,

Who knowest all, whose speech is ever free,
For charity, I pray thee, speak of me!"
To satisfy each indiscreet demand
Fame holds two trumpets, one in either hand ;
This to her lips, with justice, see her raise
To celebrate some noble hero's praise ;
While t'other, strange to tell is oft applied
(Since I must say it) to her broad back-side ;
And serves in sounds sonorous to express
The name of the last rubbish from the press : *
Productions of each mercenary quill,
Ephemeral insects of Parnassus Hill ;
That each by each eclipsed, in turn decay
Labours of months that perish in a day,
Buried with college pedants, men of schools
Themselves worm-eaten by their verse and rules.

Here would-be authors, a malicious band,
Detractors of all real genius stand ;
Here La Beaumelle, Fréron, Nonnotte we view,
Guyon, and he, the refuse of the crew,

* *V a r i a n t*: *The name of the last rubbish from the press :*
Verses of Danchet, prose of Marivaux,
Productions of each venal quill of crow ;

Savatier, the instrument of fraud,
Who sells his pen and lies to swell his hoard.
These shameless hucksters of reproach and blame,
Here crowd around and dare solicit fame,
Bedaubed with filth, they've yet the vanity
To shew themselves to this divinity:
Still from her presence chased with stripes unkind,
Scarce have they seen the goddess's behind.
Still on thine ass, Dunois, thou keep'st thy seat,
And art transported to this bright retreat;
Thy virtuous deeds, which were so justly famed,
The goddess with her decent trump proclaimed;
What must have been thy pleasure at the sight,
When gazing there upon each mirror bright,
To view in those reflectors purely clear,
* Of all thy virtues the resemblance dear;
Not simply feats of arms which victors crown,
Sieges and battles that create renown,
But virtues far more difficult to see;
For wretches in the asylum due to thee,
Bless and record thy generosity;
With honest men, protected at the court
By thee, and orphans righted through thy thought.

Dunois with honest pride some time surveyed

His gallant actions on those walls portrayed:
And little less delighted seemed the ass,
Who pranced and capered round from glass to glass.
Meanwhile, was heard through air the clarion sound
From one of Fame's two trumpets so renowned,
These words proclaiming: "*'T is the dreadful day,
When Dorothy to stake must wend her way,
And die in Milan; such is the behest,
Weep every mortal whom dear love hath blest.*"

"How now?" exclaimed Dunois, "condemn the fair?
What hath she done? Why burn a beauty rare?
If old or foul, 't were well; but why conspire
To punish youthful loveliness with fire?
By all the Saints! such cruelty is too bad!
Ye men of Milan, have ye all gone mad?"
Yet as he spoke, the Trumpet made reply:
*"This hour, the hapless Dorothy must die,
Unless some hardy knight the adventure take
To snatch the damsel from the fatal stake!"*

These sounds the bosom of Dunois inspired;
The lady's rescue straight his heart desired;
For, well ye know, as soon as chance displayed
Occasion for his courage, he obeyed;
To punish injuries, and wrongs redress,
He thoughtless hurried, summoned by distress.

"Bear me, my faithful ass, to Milan's walls,
Direct thy flight," he cries, "where honour calls."
His ample wings the beast obedient plies,
Less rapidly four-winged cherubim flies.
Now near the city by whose same consent
Justice decrees tremendous punishment,
Already they observed base slaves prepare,
The stake and faggots in the ample square.
Three hundred archers, their joy others' pain,
Their stations took the rabble to restrain
The gentry wait at windows, bathed in tears:
The archbishop in robes of state appears,
From a balcony with his priests on high,
Who view the scene with firm complacent eye.

Four Alguazils lead Dorothea round
Stripped to her shift, in galling fetters bound.
Wildness and horror mark her mournful air,
Shame and confusion heighten her despair.
Before her grieving eyes a cloud is shed
And bitter tears adown her cheeks have spread,
She scarce discerned death's instruments revealed,
The direful stake whereon her fate is sealed;
And through her sobs at last her sad words start:
"O lover mine! O thou who in mine heart,

Reignest always, ev'n in this hour of dread——”
The suppliant ceased, for no more could be said,
And stammering forth of him she loved the name,
Speechless she sank to earth, a senseless frame,
Her forehead spread with a pale mortal hue ;
Still lovely was she in that state to view.
Before the crowd stepped forth a caitiff wight,
The prelate's champion, Sacrogorgon hight ;
Tow'rd's the dire pile, behold him straight advance,
Armed at all points, with steel and arrogance.
Then cried : “My friends, a vow to God I make
That Dorothy hath well deserved the stake ;
Will any one here present risk his life,
And for her wage 'gainst me in mortal strife?
If so, let him his daring strength display,
That with my look I strike him with dismay ;
And show him that, which soon shall smart his brain.”
Thus having spoke, he fiercely paced the plain,
Wielding a sharp edged sword of massive size,
Twisting his mouth and rolling his huge eyes ;
They shudder who behold his aspect dire
Nor in the town was found a single squire,
Who to defend fair Dorothea dared,
So are they all by Sacrogorgon scared.
From fit reply withheld by abject fear,

All pay the tribute of a ready tear.
While the fierce Prelate from his seat on high,
Applauds his champion's arrogant defy.
Dunois, still hovering o'er the ample square,
Is shocked to meet audacity so rare.
And lovely Dorothea bathed in tears,
So beautiful in horror's midst appears,
Her deep despair lends such soft languishment ;
To see her was to hold her innocent.
To ground the Hero vaults, and cries : "Behold,
My courage shall chastise thy vauntings bold ;
Prove Dorothy as virtuous as she is wise,
And thine assertions, recreant braggart, lies !
But I would first from Dorothea know,
The imputed crime, the pretext of her woe ;
Hear her sad story, learn what horrid plan,
Condemns to flames the beauties of Milan !"
He spake, and all the multitude gave scope,
Combining mingled shouts of joy and hope,
The trembling Sacrogorgon, terror's slave,
Strove all he could to act the part of brave,
While vain the prelate sought to lull to rest
Those fears that stole upon his dastard breast.

Dunois advanced with noble, courteous grace

To hear fair Dorothy's most piteous case ;
She, casting down her eyes, her story told
With sighs and tears and pauses manifold.
The ass divine judged meet his form to perch,
Beholding all from steeple of the church ;
While Milan's devotees, in ardent prayer,
Gave thanks to God who takes of girls due care.

CANTO VII

*How Dunois rescued Dorothy condemned to death by
the inquisition.*

When, in the spring-time of my youth, some fair
Abandoned me to be the slave of care,
My wounded heart indignant spurned love's reign,
And left his empire fraught with just disdain :
But to offend the fair, with rage thus fraught,
In word or act, ne'er entered once my thought ;
'T was not my mode to force a stubborn heart.
I pardoned one who Love's great law abused,
Who played a fickle and a faithless part :
A cruel fair I sooner had excused,
A generous lover ever must disdain
To persecute the maid he cannot gain.
Therefore, if she, for whom thy passions burn,
Doth not with equal love thy love return,
Seek elsewhere for some mistress less severe,
Sufficient numbers thou wilt find, ne'er fear !

Else take to drink ; it is a course most wise.
And would to God, that being in such guise,
That tonsured prelate, barbarous and rude
Whose brutal love so cruelly pursued
And plunged in woe a maid of beauty rare,
Had been advised by me on this affair.

Soon hath Dunois the fair afflicted maid
Inspired with courage and in hope arrayed ;
Yet was it just that he the charge should hear
Which doomed the beauty to this lot severe.

"O thou !" she blushing cried with downcast eyes,
"Bright angel, who descendest from the skies,
Heaven sent, it seems to fight in my defence,
To thee, at least, is known my innocence !"
"By some strange chance unknown," Dunois replied,
"I come, though not with heavenly power supplied,
To shield thy life from death's relentless dart,
Omnipotence alone can read thy heart ;
I know thy soul is virtuous and white,
But, prithee tell the reason of thy plight."
Fair Dorothea, weeping thus replied :
"Love is my crime, and Love alone !" she cried.
Big tears, while yet she spoke, bedewed her face ;

"'T is love betrays me to this sad disgrace ;
Of La Trimouille has the name crossed your ear?"
Dunois exclaimed: "My friend, of all most dear!
Few heroes have a soul of finer steel,
Nor has my king a warrior more leal,
Britain has no more dreaded enemy,
No cavalier more worthy love can be!"
"Too true your speech, sir knight," she cried, "'t is he.
Nor yet elapsed is one revolving year,
Since he from Milan hied, and left me here.
Here first for me he felt Love's pleasing pain,
Here first he sighed, nor sighed he long in vain ;
O may the youth still fond and faithful prove,
He should love well, for far too well I love!"
"Judge of his faith," Dunois replied, "by yours—
Such wondrous charms his constancy ensures ;
I know him: as myself he'll guard the trust,
True to his love, as to his sovereign just."
"Yes," she exclaimed, "I credit what you say,
And still shall bless the kind auspicious day,
Gave to my sight the idol of my soul,
And lit a flame no reason could controul.
To me appeared the loveliest of mankind,
Of less attractive form, than gracious mind ;
Him I adored with feeling's fervid glow

Scarce conscious whether yet I loved or no.

" 'T was at the Archbishop's board—entrancing hour !
He made confession of love's conquering power ;
Ah ! then an unknown fever seized my blood,
And through my veins rushed on the crimson flood ;
Mute was my tongue and dim my glazy sight,
No more the banquet spurred my appetite ;
'T was thus I felt the powerful impulse move,
Nor dreamt of dangers that await on love.
Next morn he came, but transient was the view,
His stay was short, too soon he bade adieu !
And, as he went, my heart recalled his sight,
My tender heart, which after him took flight.
Next day, indeed, we had a *tête à tête*,
A little longer but no less discreet,
Next day he stole a kiss, I can't tell how,
And offered next to plight the marriage vow ;
Next day again more boldly he beguiled,
So that the next day he got me with child !
What do I say ? and need I thus proclaim
Through every stage my sorrow and my shame,
Unknowing yet, O knight of martial pride,
In what great hero thus I dare confide."
Mute on the subject of his birth and deeds,

The courteous knight obedient thus proceeds:
"I am *Dunois*!" It was enough to say.
"Then Heaven," she cried, "has answered when I pray;
Yes, pitying fate dispatches to my aid
The great *Dunois*, whose arm must be obeyed.
Ah, 't is apparent whence your birth you owe
Enchanting Bastard, warmed with godlike glow!
Of tender Love I was the victim true,
And Love's own child my saviour proves in you;
Kind Heaven is just, and hope springs forth anew.
Know then, *Dunois*, thou brave and courteous knight,
Ere many months elapsed, my soul's delight
Heard the loud voice of duty from afar,
And left my arms, to join the ranks of war.
Ah! horrid war, and England, cursed land!
My love's despair you well can understand.
A state like this you doubtless have confest,
And know the anguish of the sufferer's breast;
'T is thus imperious duty blights love's ray;
I proved it as in tears I spent that day;
Restraint too added torture to my pain,
And agonized, I dared not to complain.
A curious bracelet of his golden hair,
Dear Relic! guarded with religious care!
His portrait too he parting gave, whose powers

In absence cheated oft the heavy hours.
Last to my care he left a precious scroll,
Whereon was firmly traced Love's glowing soul ;
It was, Sir Knight, a promise justly made,
Dear surety of his tenderness displayed,
And thus it ran : 'By mighty Love I swear,
By all the bliss my ravished soul can share,
Ere long great Milan's court again to see,
And give my hand and heart to Dorothy.'

"Alas! he listened to stern duty's call,
Perhaps is still near Orléans' lofty wall.
Ah, could he now my matchless sorrow know,
Or once suspect my complicated woe!
But no, just Heaven, in ignorance let him rest,
Why pain with bootless grief his noble breast?
Trimouille departed, thus, surmise to drown,
I left the confines of a tattling town,
And in a lone retreat seclusion sought
Framed to indulge my bosom's anguished thought
My parents dead, I gave my sadness rein,
Hid from the world, no eyes discerned my pain ;
'Twas thus I starved in secrecy my fears,
My ripening pregnancy and ceaseless tears ;
But ah! sad truth destructive of my peace

Alas! I chance to be the Archbishop's niece."
At these sad words her sobs and tears increase.
Uprearing then her streaming eyes to heaven,
"To light," she cried, "I now my babe had given;
Pledge of a furtive love, that in mine arms,
Consoled my griefs and banished mine alarms;
Thus anxious I my love's return implored,
My mind's eye dwelling on his form adored.
'Twas then the Archbishop took into his head
To come and pry into the life I led;
The palace quitted, pomp and grand parade,
He came to greet his niece in forest's shade.
Ill fated hour! O why did form like mine
To Love abhorred my uncle's breast incline?
Detested gift, which now my hate inspires
Features that kindle passion's foulest fires;
He breathed his flame—Heaven, what was my surprise!
I placed his rank and duties 'fore his eyes,
His sacred calling, and what further stood,
Great bar—the consanguinity of blood!
Just portrait of the horrid act I drew,
Repugnant to the church and nature too;
Alas! to talk of duties was but vain,
A hope chimerical had fired his brain.
He fondly thought my heart was still to tame,

As yet untroubled by an alien flame ;
In fine that passion was to me unknown,
And triumph therefore soon would be his own.
To practise hateful arts he ceaseless toiled,
Attentions loathed, desires for ever foiled.

“One day, alas ! as oft had been before,
My eyes perused the plighted promise o’er ;
As tears bedewed the page with fervour fraught,
Thus reading, was I by my uncle caught,
His hostile hand detained the fatal scroll
In which he read the secrets of my soul ;
He saw me plighted as another’s bride,
Nor could I long my darling infant hide :
And what in others might have damped desire
Did but add fuel to his wanton fire.
He seized the advantage which my secret gave :
‘Tis me,’ he cried, ‘tis me alone you brave,
While you reserve such favours he finds good
To the rash knave who slew your maidenhood ?
Think twice before you dare resist me still ;
Beware, judge wisely, you deserve but ill
That love which has enslaved me to your will.
Yield on the instant or my vengeance meet.’
I sank affrighted at my uncle’s feet,

I called on God: with tears I strove to move
His heart grown mad with rage and slighted love,
But in my tears he fresh incentives found,
He seized and threw me struggling on the ground,
And would have ravished me by brutal force.*
My cries for succour were my last resource!
When obstinate I dared his lust oppose,
O Heavens! I suffered from my uncle's blows!
Rejected love to sudden hatred rose.
The neighbours came, roused by my piercing cries;
A prompt excuse his ready wit supplies;
Fresh crime makes that crime still more hideous.
'Christians!' he says, 'my niece is impious;
I excommunicate, abandon her
Whom a damned heretic and seducer
Has brought to flagrant and to open shame!
Adulterous is the child, without a name.
Then may the mother and the child God curse;
They have my malediction which is worse;
And let the Inquisition be their nurse!'

"No threat the traitor thus pronounced in vain:

* Variant: *And would have ravished me by brutal force.*
To desperate struggling I had recourse,
But cries for succour were my last resource.

Scarce had he entered Milan than a train
By grand Inquisitor was forthwith sent,
Which seized and dragged me straight to punishment,
In dungeon, where my mind was left to brood
And anguish, sighs and tears my bitter food ;
Those horrid vaults whence light and wholesome air
Excluded, yield fit dwellings to despair !
Three days expired, mine eyes beheld the light
Till tortures closed them in the realms of night ;
You see the stake, amid the fire's fierce rage,
There must I die at twenty years of age ;
This is the bed for my expiring hour ;
'Tis there, 'tis there, without your vengeful power,
With life, my honour I must quickly yield :
Though many a knight for me had ta'en the field,
And couched the lance, defending my just cause,
Had not my uncle chained them by the laws
Of mother church, 'gainst which none dares depart : *
Ah ! there's no valour in the Italian heart !
They tremble at the mere sight of a stole ;
Whereas your Frenchman boasts a dauntless soul,

* Variant: *Of mother church, 'gainst which none argues*
(twice ;

Ardent for ill, where good's concerned, like ice,
Ah ! there's no valour, etc.

And braves the Pope in his own Capitol."

This honour-goadng theme stirred Dunois' breast,
Who felt acutely for the fair opprest,
Fraught with just rage against her deadly foe,
He thirsted to inflict the vengeful blow,
And felt an easy conquest would ensue,
Till, sudden gazing round, were seen in view
An hundred archers fierce, despising fear
Investing him most nobly from the rear.
With bonnet square, a caitiff, sable-clad
Declaimed in terms as *Miserere* sad :
"From Holy church, to all whom it may concern !
From Monsignor, and for God's glory, learn :
To Christians, blessed by the eternal Sire,
That we condemn to faggot and to fire
This foreign champion, who dares brave the fight
Of Dorothy, the sacrilegious knight.
As heretic, magician, infidel :
Let him be burned forthwith, his ass as well !"
Cruel priest ! O Busiris, in cassock rayed,
Wretch, 't was a trick of thine insidious trade,
This warrior's arm thou didst not dare discount,
So with the Holy Office took account,
Beneath the name of justice to oppress,

Him who stood forth the champion of distress,
And drew that dreadful veil from human sight,
Which scarfed from mortal eyes the deeds of night.
Of Holy Office now the recreant crew,
Their murderous purpose keeping still in view,
To seize Dunois, brave knight of chivalry
Two steps advance, then backwards measure three,
March on again, then cross themselves and stand ;
When Sacrogorgon, leader of the band,
Trembling exclaims: "We'll die or conquer now ;
This dire magician to our arms shall bow."
The sacristans and deacons of the town,
Amongst the rest, in solemn file troop down ;
These bore *Aspergers*, these the holy urns,
Whence salted water sprinkled each by turns.
The Fiend they curse and greatly exorcize ;
While the proud prelate with his anxious eyes,
All round his benedictions lavishes.

Dunois felt shocked, though godly his intent
That any should esteem him Satan-sent ;
With one stout hand his trusty sword he took,
The other a most pious object shook,
Salvation's pledge, a holy rosary ;
Then called his ass, who still sat perched on high.

The ass descends, astride the hero sprung,
And dealt thick blows the caitiff crowd among ;
Of one the *sternum* and the arm he hit,
Another pierced where *atlas* bone is knit ;
One drops a nose, his jaw's in piteous plight,
One sinks for ever into gloomy night ;
Here falls an ear and here a *humerus*,
And some run howling out an *oremus* :
Our ass, amidst this carnage shows his might,
Supporting gallantly his errant knight ;
He flies, kicks, bites and tramples in the dust
These vagrant foes of the defenceless just.
Now Sacrogorgon close his vizor wears,
While still retreating, lustily he swears ;
Dunois arrives, he cleaves the *os pubis*,
The bloody blade passed out by the *coccis*,
The wounded miscreant falls, the people roar,
"Blessed be God ! The villain lives no more."

Still on the dust the ruffian struggling lay,
When thus exclaimed the hero : "Prithce, say,
Most treacherous soul, whom Hell waits and the grave,
Confess, the archbishop is but a mitred knave?
A ravisher, and proved a perjured elf,
While Dorothy is innocence itself,

To her one lover constant proved and true :
The worthless and besotted fool is—you!"
"Yes, yes," he cried, "my Lord is in the right,
I am a fool, the thing's as clear as light,
Your doughty sword has proved your precept well."
He spoke: his caitiff soul went down to Hell.

As the vile, graceless braggart's soul took flight,
To join fell Satan in the realms of night,
A squire was seen amid the crowd to advance,
A helm he wore and waved a gilded lance :
Two couriers gay in yellow livery
Preceded still this gallant equerry,
Sure symbol that some noble knight was near.
No sooner did these unknown forms appear,
Than Dorothy at the unlooked-for sight,
Exclaimed aloud: "It is, it must be, he!
Kind Heaven's too gracious to my misery."

This squire through Milan town caught every eye.
The folk are cursed with curiosity!

Say then, dear Reader, are you not ashamed
To indulge this silly fault I just have named ;
And let this squire who caused such strange surprise

Usurp your spirit and engross your eyes :
Is this the aim and purpose of my song ?
Oh, think of Orléans and its warlike throng,
Of cruel besiegers, Charles who holds the throne,
And of our amazon, the illustrious Joan,
Who, without bonnet, petticoat or gown,
Like Centaur scours the country up and down,
Placing more confidence in Heaven's high will
Than all the courage nature can instill ;
Addressing now and then a fervent prayer
To good St. Denis, whose assiduous care
To the affairs of France was wholly given ;
Who now caballed against St. George in Heaven.
Above all, Reader, Agnes ne'er forget,
But on her charms your fervid fancy set :
Is there a man so sullen and austere
Could look on Agnes with an eye severe ?
Each honest man must love to linger there.
And now, my friend, I frankly would enquire,
If Dorothy was sentenced to the fire ;
Or did the author of all things on high
Rescue this victim of calamity ?
Such case but seldom finds its parallel :
But that an object you love passing well
For whom your constant tears prove love's alarms

Should find repose in some stout chaplain's arms,
Or with a youthful page fond embrace ;—
You must allow it no uncommon case.
Such accident more common is no doubt,
Nor needs a miracle to bring about.
I love, I own, adventures to pursue,
That still keep Human Nature full in view :
For I'm a man, and I am proud to say,
Had share of human weakness in my day :
Of old I've clasped my mistress in my arms,
And still the pleasing recollection charms.

CANTO VIII

*How the gallant La Trimouille met an Englishman at
Notre Dame de Lorette, and the Sequel of the story of
his Dorothy.*

How wise, how interesting proves our page ;
The heart and mind at once formed to engage !
Virtue triumphant here we always view,
Each knight has courage, aye, and conduct too ;
The rights of kings, chaste feelings of the fair
All are displayed ; it is a garden rare,
Whose whole contour is pleasing to the eye,
At once by culture and variety.
And fairest flower that ever garden graced
Here blooms supreme, the virtue that is chaste ;
Like the white lily, Heaven's peculiar care
Lifting its head immaculate to the air.
Youths, maidens all, my lays assiduous read,
Of heavenly virtue the divinest creed.
The learned Picard, abbé Tritemus,
Pride of his age has written it for us ;
Our Joan and Agnes for his theme he took.

How I admire him ! and with pleasure look
On times now past, when I alone preferred
His wholesome modest page, and then averred
How much the sense surpassed those rapid strains
That flow in torrents from romancers' brains,
From whose dull wits abortive themes appear,
Born but to perish in one short-lived year.
The wonder of our Joan's portentous fate
Shall triumph over time's remotest date ;
And baffle envy. 'T is the truth I tell,
And truth alone is really durable.

But yet, dear Reader, 't is not in my power,
To occupy with Joan the present hour ;
Since Dorothy, Dunois, her champion,
And La Trimouille who all her love had won,
Each have upon my verse a rightful claim ;
And I must here confess, devoid of shame,
That with just cause, the reader may enquire
What was the sequel of their tender fire.

Near Orléans (recall the scene to view)
Brave La Trimouille, the glory of Poitou,
While for the king performing valour's feat
Neck-deep in ditch enjoyed a muddy treat.

His squires extracted him, with pain, I trow,
From the foul bottom of the filthy slough ;
Our hero galled by many a direful stroke,
Had shoulder shattered and his elbow broke ;
So was conveyed the sore afflicted knight,
Within the ramparts, in this piteous plight ;
But Talbot, keeping vigilance in view,
Had to the city barred each avenue ;
By secret path then silent they conveyed
Our Paladin, of ambush sore afraid,
To ancient Tours, on litter safe reclined,
City most faithful and to Charles resigned.
There a Venetian quack, just come to us,
Adroitly put to rights the *radius*,
And in its socket set the *humerus*.
His squire informed him that all thoughts were vain,
Of now returning to the king again,
Since every road was guarded by the foe.
The hero, ever thrilled by passion's glow,
At length resolved, consumed by dire ennui,
That he would speed his lady-love to see.
Through throng and dangers fared the knight to gain
The Lombards spoil, the fair and pleasant plain ;
And gaining Milan's walls, with soul elate
There found advancing to the city's gate,

Like flood resistless, a besotted band,
Collected from the circumjacent land,
Crowding to Milan, citizen and clown ;
Monk, Benedictine hurried to the town ;
Parents and children, noisy rabble train,
Whose eagerness the barrier could restrain,
Forward they press and cry : "Let's hurry there,
We do not every day such pastime share !"

Soon learned our knight with horror and dismay
What made these worthy Lombards' holiday,
The spectacle prepared to meet his sight
"My Dorothy !" he cried, then took his flight ;
His courser vaulting o'er each vagrant's head
Quick bounded forward ; so the knight was led
From suburbs and the city to the square ;
When lo ! he saw the conquering bastard stand,
The mob subduing with his valorous hand ;
While Dorothy, quite speechless from surprise,
Scarce dared from earth to raise her timid eyes.
Abbé Tritemus, I must truly say
Though great his talents, never could portray
What wells of ecstasy, surprise, delight
Filled her pure bosom at the sudden sight,
Of her love's coming on that direful day.

What colour or what pencil could convey
That mélange soft, so pleasant and so keen
Of joy ensuing where her pain had been,
Of thrilling ecstasy, the blissful tide?
Confusion, virtue, shame she could not hide,
While by degrees, soft passion overcame.
Trimouille impelled by the resistless flame
Within his ardent arms her form entwined,
By bliss subdued, to tenderness resigned;
And thus embraced in turn, with transport mute,
Dunois, his mistress and the long-eared brute.
The fair sex at their windows saw the sight,
And clapped their hands with rapturous delight;
The cassocked gentry o'er the ruins fled
Of the dire pile and place bestrewed with dead.
Amidst the débris, reeking still with blood
The gallant knight, the dauntless Dunois stood,
But now fair Dorothy in honour rode,
Borne in a litter to a safe abode,
The air and port of Hercules maintained,
Who once beneath his feet grim death enchained,
And bound Eumenides the furies fell
And Cerberus, three-headed hound of hell,
Yielding Alcestis to her husband's arms,
Who still in secret felt some jealous qualms

Whilst the two heroes closely rode behind :
Next morn our Bastard led by feelings kind,
Approached the bed whereon the lovers lay :
"I feel, he cried; how useless 't is to stay,
Since your sweet pleasures I can not enhance ;
Joan and King Charles require my aid in France.
I'll now rejoin them, for I know that Joan
The absence of her ass doth much bemoan.
Denis, the patron of our realm, revered,
To me this night in person hath appeared ;
Denis I saw as plain as you I see ;
Denis, who lent his mount divine to me ;
To succour kings and dames afflicted sore,
He ordered me to visit France once more.
Thank Heaven, I've rendered service to the fair,
The monarch Charles, in turn, demands my care ;
Taste now the pleasures that fond lovers share.
I seek the king, obedient to the fates ;
I yield my life—time flies—mine ass awaits."

"My steed I'll mount, and after you I'll ride !"
The ever-courteous La Trimouille replied.
The fair one said: "Such is my project too.
I long have felt a lively wish to view
Gay Charles the Seventh and his gallant court,

Where knights unequalled in renown resort ;
Gentle Agnes, who governeth his heart,
And fiery Joan who chose the warrior's part.
My cherished lover, and my saviour friend
Would safe conduct me to the world's far end.
But on the point of roasting, sore distressed,
Unto the Virgin I my prayers addressed ;
And vowed if rescued from impending woe,
On pilgrimage I'd to Loretto go.
Forthwith God's mother, as this came to pass,
Dispatched you hither on your heavenly ass ;
From the dread stake you brought security,
I live through you ; my vow must sacred be,
Or justly will the Virgin punish me."

"Your converse is discreet and wondrous sage,"
Exclaimed Trimouille, "and such a pilgrimage
Becomes a sacred duty which you owe.
I will alike on this excursion go ;
Loretto warms me with a zealot's ray ;
Thither I'll lead thee ; Dunois, speed thy way ;
Through starry realms, pursue thine airy flight,
Till fertile plains of Blois appear in sight ;
I hope and purpose to rejoin you soon
Ere the completion of another moon.

You, Madam, hieing to Loretto straight,
Fulfil the pious vow you contemplate.
Whilst I make one that's worthy your fair face,
To prove at every time, in every place,
To every comer, or with sword or lance
The fond affection which I here advance,
That you surpass in beauty and in grace
All maids and women of whatever race."
The fair one blushed; from earth the gray ass springs,
Spurning the ground, he spreads his ample wings,
And soon beyond the near horizon flown,
Seeks the pure sources of the rapid Rhone.

The Poitevin with his fair dame so gay,
To rich Ancona took the nearest way.
The pilgrim's staff their pious purpose tell,
And palmer's hat bedecked with cockle shell;
While blessed rosaries from their waists depend,
Where pearls and gold in beads alternate blend.
Oftimes the Paladin these beads would tell;
Ave, he said: the fair responded well,
Anon with sighs, with litanies again;
But still *I love you* was the sweet refrain
Of th'orisons thus chanted by these twain.

They travelled through Placenza and Modena,
Through Parma, through Urbino, through Cesena,
And lodged each night within the sumptuous walls
Of Princes, Dukes and Counts and Cardinals.
Our knight this grand advantage too possessed
Upholding of all dames his fair the best,
For wisdom, beauty and celestial grace,
To Dorothy assigning sovereign place ;
Which bold opinion no one dared dispute
Avouched by knight so famed ; each tongue was mute
Such the good breeding and sage policy,
Of all these noble lords of Italy.

Along Musona's banks near Riconate,
Rising amidst Ancona's marquissate,
Afar the pilgrims saw where brightly shone
The lofty mansion of the bless'd madonne ;
Those walls which tutelary angels bore
From holy Palestine in days of yore,
Fending the air with an impressive sweep,
As a ship ploughs the billows of the deep.
Loretto was the ending of their way ;
And of themselves the walls resolved to stay :
And ever since succeeding Popes have vied,
(Vicars of Heaven, and Lords of Earth beside)

In heaping what most precious could be got,
To ornament that highly favoured spot.
Our lovers from on horseback here descend,
And on both knees, with due contrition bend ;
Then both, to ratify the vow they made,
Most sumptuous offerings on the altar laid ;
Accepted all with gratitude profound,
Both by the Virgin and the monks around.

Unto the inn our lovers went and dined,
Where as a fellow-guest, whom should they find,
But a bold Briton, careless, rough and free,
For pastime come the Virgin's shrine to see ;
A sorry joke to his contemptuous view,
Appeared Loretto, and our Lady too ;
True Briton, travelling he knew not why,
New-made *antiques* he *dearly* loved to buy,
His sweeping air all haughtily comprised ;
The saints and all their relics he despised.
Of every Frenchman the opponent fell ;
His name was Christopher of Arundel ;
Through Italy he made a dismal tour,
But still his *ennui* did not find a cure ;
While with him went the mistress of the wight,
Proud as himself and even less polite ;

Little she spoke, though formed of finest clay,
Loving at night, yet insolent by day ;
In bed, at board, capriciously perverse,
In all things was she Dorothy's reverse.

The baron bold, Poitou's bright ornament
First greets him with a well-turned compliment ;
But the rude Briton deigned not to reply !
Still would the courteous knight new matter try ;
Told how the Virgin Mary lent her aid,
Told of his vow amidst the Lombards made,
To great Saint Denis, in each time and place,
To prove his mistress' superior grace ;
Addressing thus the Briton full of scorn :
"I do not doubt your Lady nobly born ;
Doubtless with beauty virtue's joined to it ;
Nay more, I trow she hath a pretty wit,
Though she has so far nothing had to say ;
Her Dorothy surpasses any day.
You'll own to it, and grant her second place ;
With such a rival, none can deem disgrace."

The British knight from head to foot surveyed
The gallant lord, and this rough answer made ;
"God damn me if I care one pinch of snuff

For vows to Denis or such silly stuff ;
And for that girl of yours, what boots it me
That wise or foolish, foul or fair she be !
Each his own property should cherish most,
Nor make of what he has an idle boast ;
But since you thus have had the insolence
To dare assume a sort of preference
O'er Briton born, I'll teach you soon to know
The duty which to England's sons you owe ;
For in such case, we islanders ne'er prate,
But give each upstart Gaul a broken pate ;
And so my mistress, both in figure, size,
Colour and plumpness, bosom, arms and thighs
In virtuous sentiments, and charms of mind
Leaves your much vaunted pilgrim far behind.
And so my king (for whom I little care)
Discomforture can, when he will, prepare,
Both for your master and your clumsy Fair."
"'T is well!" the champion of Poitou replied.
"Hence let us go, and let the sword decide,
To your dismay, perhaps, I'll shortly prove,
How much you wrong my country, king and love.
But since in courtesy we still should vie
The choice of combat at your will shall lie ;
Whether on foot or horseback, prithee say ;

Your inclination o'er my wish shall sway."
"On foot, by God!" the Englishman declared,
"I would not that a horse my glory shared ;
Throw the cuirass, throw the strong morion by,
Let coward breasts to steel for shelter fly.
It is too hot ; I like to be at ease,
But being stripped I'll argue as you please ;
The strokes our rival beauties shall decide."
"Just as you please," the Gallic hero cried.
The challenge troubled his dear Dorothy,
Though in her heart she felt the flattery,
Of being subject of such deadly feud ;
Trembling the while, lest Arundel imbued
With deadly steel the bosom of her dear
Which she then moistened with a piteous tear.
Meantime the British dame her champion warmed
With a proud glance conscious of how she charmed.
Her cheeks were never sullied by a tear,
Contention to her haughty heart was dear ;
Her nation's cock-fights were the games which she
Had always cherished with avidity.
Judith of Rosamore was styled the dame,
Bristol admired her, Cambridge told her fame.

Behold our hardy knights strip off their clothes,

And in close fight prepare for sturdy blows,
Each gallant with his noble quarrel charmed,
In maintenance of love and country armed ;
The front erect, well poised the glittering steel,
The arm extended, body in profile,
Rapid they join their swords, in quart and tierce,
Each by the other struck in contact fierce ;
'T is pleasant to observe them stoop, advance,
Rise and recoil, or active turn askance ;
Parry and feint, then with address leap back,
And boldly recommence the rude attack.
Thus we may view in the celestial plains,
Beneath the Lion, or when the Dog-star reigns,
The horizon flames and burns with sudden light,
A thousand fires attract the dazzled sight ;
Whilst universal conflict seems decreed,
And vivid lightnings flash to flash succeed.

A blow right well directed by the Gaul,
Straight at the Briton's chin he now let fall ;
And lightly springing back preserves his guard,
While Arundel in turn then presses hard,
And dashing on in tierce, assails his foe
Whose thigh incontinent receives a blow,
When streaming blood the polished flesh imbrues,

The ivory tinged with variegated hues ;
Whilst these assaults our combatants enrage,
Each glad to die, so he may but engage
A mistress' plaudit, and at once decide
The fair one, who shall reign the victor's pride,
Arrived a bandit from the Papal Power
With troops dispatched the country wide to scour,
Who gives with promptitude his mission scope
To pay his pure devotion to the Pope.
This rascal bore the name of Martinguerre,
Thief night and day, and always a corsair ;
But duly on the Virgin's service set
To tell his rosary he'd ne'er forget,
That purged from every sin his soul might be.
He chanced within the close our dames to see,
Their steeds and the bright trappings that they wore,
Their mules which *agnuses* and treasure bore :
Which when he saw, our heroes saw no more ;
For off he carried Judith Rosamore,
And Dorothy, and all the baggage too ;
Horses and mules swift vanished from the view.

Still in the dubious strife, our hardy pair,
Brandished their shining faulchions in the air,
And death and danger for their ladies braved ;

It was the Poitevin who first perceived
The Fair had vanished from the scene of war,
And saw their esquires galloping afar.
He stood amazed—his sharply pointed brand,
Remained effectless in his feeble hand.
Lord Arundel was seized with like surprise ;
They stand with gaping mouth and staring eyes,
Gazing around till Christopher exclaims :
“As God’s my judge, they’ve carried off our dames !
Why stand we madly thus like mortal foes
Inflicting on each other cruel blows ?
Better pursue them ; and renew the attack,
To prove who’s fairest when we bring them back.”
They both agree the quarrel to postpone
And like good friends depart to seek their own.
But e’er an hundred yards our heroes move,
“In arm and thigh what pain,” cried one, “I prove !”
While similar complaint the other made
Of his scarred breast and of his wounded head.
Those animal spirits which make heroes fight
Now rushing round the heart no more excite ;
Nor could they more impetuous ardour boast
Which with their loss of blood was also lost.
Both bruised and languishing from many a wound,
Together fell upon the blood-stained ground ;

And far away their trusty squires the while
Pursued the robber many a tedious mile.
Our Paladins extended on the plain,
Naked and moneyless, in grief and pain,
Life's latest moment they believe at hand,
When worn with years and traversing the land,
A dame beheld them in such plight arrayed,
And in a litter had them both conveyed
To her own homestead, where within a trice
She cured their wounds by medical device!
Her lenient remedies at once repair
Exhausted strength, and give a healthful air.
This ancient dame was a reputed Saint,
Highly respected wheresoe'er she went ;
Nor round Ancona was there one could vie
With her in pious works and sanctity.
She could foretell the weather, foul or fair,
Cure slighter wounds with oil and holy prayer ;
And had more times than once obtained the praise
Of turning sinners from their wicked ways.

Our heroes to the dame their tale confess,
And claim her counsel in this dire distress ;
The half decrepit beldam shook her head,
Prayed to the Virgin, opened mouth and said :

"Depart in peace, and love your ladies gay,
Provided always, in an honest way!
Cautioned by me this wholesome counsel take,
Never to kill yourselves for either's sake.
The tender subjects of your ardent love
Are now subjected rude assaults to prove;
Your ladies fair now suffer trials rude,
I mourn their woes and your solicitude.
Dress yourselves quick, to horse without delay,
And take good care you do not miss your way.
Through me Heaven sends this information kind,
That you must follow what you wish to find."
The Poitevin admired her energy,
The sombre Briton said: "Your prophecy
Is true; this flying robber swift and sure
We'll follow if fresh steeds we can procure,
And be with doublets and with arms supplied."
"I'll furnish them," the withered hag replied.
It chanced a son of Isaac luckily,
Well circumcised and bearded stood hard-by;
Of the deprepuce race he was the flower,
Ready to proffer service any hour.
This worthy Jew most generously lent
Two thousand crowns at forty-five percent.
According to the *uses* of that race,

Whom Moses led into the promised place ;
The profit of this monetary affair
The saintly dame and Jew agreed to share.

CANTO IX

*How La Trimouille and Lord Arundel overtook their Ladies
in Provence, and of the strange adventure which befell
them in Sainte-Beaume.*

Two cavaliers who well the fight have waged,
Mounted or in a fencing match engaged,
Whether with broad sword, pointed rapier thin,
Armed *cap à pie*, or naked to the skin,
Reciprocal esteem in secret feel,
As both their meritorious acts reveal;
And, when from anger free, they laud each blow
Ablly inflicted by the gallant foe;
But when the conflict's o'er, should fate's decree
Involve the champions in calamity,
A common misery unites the twain,
And friendship springs from enmity again;
Of such a case occurred true parallel
With La Trimouille and spleenful Arundel.
This Arundel was cast in roughest mould,
Haughty and fierce, indifferent and cold;

Yet could his heart, though tempered like his steel,
For his polite opponent kindness feel ;
And Poitou's knight with ease sustained his part,
For Nature formed him with a tender heart.
Said he : "Your friendship cheers my drooping soul,
Some villain has my Dorothea stole ;
Help to regain the beauty I adore,
And I'll brave death to rescue Rosamore."

Thus half consoled, the foe became a friend,
Their rapid course tow'rds Leghorn's walls they bend,
Led by some false intelligence astray :
The ravisher had ta'en the opposite way ;
And while the knights depart on vain surmise,
He takes with ease his rich and noble prize.
Safely and unmolested soon he gains
A lonely castle on the sea-girt plains,
Betwixt Gaeta and imperial Rome ;
A stately mansion once, but now become
Of fierce banditti the retreat obscure,
Where rapine, filth and gluttony impure,
With all the horrors that make up their train,
Rage, blood and murder for the love of gain,
The deadly feuds which drunkenness excites ;
Days of debauch and blood-polluted nights,

Infernal lusts, that quench the gentle fires
Of Love's pure torch and delicate desires,
United rule and rage without control ;
While each excess that stains the vilest soul,
Shows how unbridled passion may debase,
Degrade and vilify the human race.
Oh man, of thy creator, shape and shade,
Consider then, 'tis thus that thou art made !

Duly arrived, the insolent corsair,
Sat down to table with the indignant fair,
One on each side ; and ate and drank and laughed,
And many a bumper to their beauty quaffed ;
At last he cried : "My damsels, 't is but right,
That you should choose who lies with me to-night ;
All's good alike, it 's all the same to me,
Or black or blonde, England or Italy,
Christian or Infidel, *petite* or tall,
—Another glass!—it matters not at all."
At this proposal a soft blush o'erspread
Fair cheeks of Dorothy with sudden red ;
Her gentle bosom swelled with heaving sighs,
And floods of anguish gushing from her eyes,
Fell on her dimpled chin, where Cupid's kiss
Had left the soft impression of his bliss

One day caressing her ; and thus distressed,
With poignant anguish was the fair oppressed.
Judith, a moment, wrapped in thought remained,
Her lofty port and dignity maintained ;
Till with a smile and air of haughty pride,
"Be mine to yield your midnight prey," she cried,
"Then learn when robbers undertake to woo,
What in their beds an English dame can do !"
A clumsy kiss anon our robber gave,
And thus made answer Martinguerre the brave :
"I always dearly loved an English lass."
Another kiss, and then another glass ;
To be refilled—and while he sings and swears,
And eats and drinks, his hand audacious dares,
Finger at random, with scant ceremony
The forms of Rosamore and Dorothy.
The latter weeps, the other with disdain
Ne'er changing colour, nor evincing pain,
Sat quite unmoved, apparently resigned
And let the ruffian act as he inclined.
At length from table with a yawn he rose,
With foot unsteady and an eye that glows,
And with a gesture of his corsair's trade,
He claims fulfilment of a bargain made ;
Still flushed from rosy Bacchus' sparkling rites
Ready he is for Cythera's soft delights.

The modest Milanese with down-cast eyes,
Bespoke the British dame: "Dare you," she cries,
"Grant the detested wretch his odious suit?
So proud a beauty yield to please a brute?"
"My purpose is to give him different fare,"
Said Rosamore; "you shall find all I dare;
Well I'll avenge my glory and my charms,
True to my honour and my lover's arms.
Know then that God, of His consummate grace,
Gave me stout arms as well as a fair face,
And *Judith* is the christian name I bear.
Await my coming in this loathly lair,
Leave me to act, but spend your time in prayer."
She then passed onwards, holding high her head,
To place herself beside her host in bed.

The night now covered with a veil of gloom
The mildewing turrets of this place of doom;
The rabble of banditti snoring lay
And slept in barns the fumes of wine away;
And Dorothy in such a wretched plight
Was left alone and almost died of fright.

The buccaneer, in that dense part his head,
Whence springs the thought, was almost numb and dead,
With vines of Italy; his heavy mind

Less upon love, than slumber, was inclined ;
And half asleep, his torpid hand he throws
O'er the proud charms for which his bosom glows ;
While Judith lavish of her tenderness
Envelops him in many a false caress ;
Death's toils she spreads ; the wearied debauchee
Yawns, turns his head, and slumbers peacefully.
Beside his bed the formidable blade
Of long-redoubted Martinguerre was laid ;
Our British dame the trenchant weapon drew,
Invoking every war-like name she knew :
Judith and Jael, Deborah the fell,
Aod, and Simon Peter called as well,
Simon-Barjona, who cut off an ear.
The robber's hair she seizes, stifling fear,
In her left hand, and lifting up his head,
That ponderous skull incasing nought but lead,
She gathers nerve ; her stroke profound and deep
Cleaves off the miscreant's head in snoring sleep.
Mixed streams of blood and wine, a dire display,
Deluged the couch on which the robber lay ;
Whilst spouting from the trunk the impurpled gore
Bespattered the fair face of Rosamore.
From out of bed the Amazon repairs,
And in her hands the bleeding head she bears,

Speeding her trembling friend anon to seek,
Who, in her arms, forgets the power to speak ;
But cried at once, upon recovery :
"O gracious God ! what woman can you be !
O what a deed, a blow ! What danger too
Attends our flight if any should pursue !
Should they awake, our lives they'll take away,"
Said Rosamore : "Speak not so loudly, pray !
My mission's not yet ended, banish care !"
The other dame grew valiant from despair.

Their lovers wandering still at hazard round,
Sought every where in vain and nothing found.
At length the walls of Genoa they gain
And having sought by land their loves in vain,
They choose to try their fortune on the main ;
Demanding news of every wind that blows,
Of the fair nymphs who trouble their repose.
The veering winds waft their light vessel o'er,
Now to the confines of that happy shore,
Where he, whose laws the Christian world obeys,
Of Paradise right humbly bears the keys ;
Now to that gulf where Thetis' aged spouse
With feeble prow the Adriatic ploughs ;
Now to gay Naples with her vine-clad steeps

Where Sannazar too nigh to Virgil sleeps.
The vexing Gods who wanton pinions ply,
Who are no more Orythias' progeny ;
O'er the green billows of old Ocean's tide,
With force impetuous our lovers guide ;
Where fell Charybdis bellows now no more,
Where Scylla's howling waves forget to roar,
And giants, crushed by Etna's fiery glow,
Ashes and flame commingled cease to throw ;
Such change with time our little world can show !
Not far from Syracuse, the wandering pair
To Arethusa's limpid fountain fare,
Whose rushy bosom now no more receives
Alpheus, thy gentle and enamoured waves ;
Borne onward thence, the classic shores they sought,
Where Carthage flourished, and Augustine taught ;
A fearful region which the living see
By rage infected and rapacity
Of mussulmans, children of ignorance.
At last our knights by Heaven's blessed chance
Attain the smiling skies of fair Provence.

There, on the shore, adorned with olive bowers,
Of Marseilles town arise the ancient towers ;
O noble city ! Greek of old and free,

These two-fold blessings have been lost by thee !
Fairer thou findest kingly servitude,
Which is,—who doubts?—a great beatitude,
Yet to thy confines boast a holy hill,
More marvellous and salutary still.
Who knows not Magdalene, who in old time,
To love devoting beauties in their prime,
Grown old, repented, bowed to Heaven her knee,
And greatly wept her mundane vanity?
From Jordan's banks in this repentant mood,
To fair Provence her journey she pursued ;
Where with a scourge she sought to purge her sin
Ofttimes beneath the rock of Maximin ;
Since when, rich odours all diffused around
Sweetly embalm the consecrated ground
And many an harlot, pilgrims not a few
Climb to that rock, with purpose to eschew
The God of Love,—a devil in their view.

The contrite Jewess on a day, 't is said,
Requested grace upon her dying bed,
Of Maximin, her pious confessor :
“Obtain for me, if ever on this shore,
About this rock, adventure lovers two,
Their time to spend in private *rendez-vous*,

Their impure flames no longer here may burn,
But all their ardour to aversion turn ;”
The blest adventuress thus having said,
Her confessor to grant her prayer was led ;
Since when, who climb this holy rock, detest
The objects heretofore they loved the best.

Marseilles inspected by our curious knights,
Its port, its roadstead, all the wondrous sights,
With which its citizens their ears assail,
Forthwith they start the sacred rock to scale,
That rock amongst the cassocked crew so famed,
Which is by them the Holy Balm surnamed ;
Whose odour wraps the realm in sanctity.
The handsome Gaul was led by piety,
The haughty Briton by curiosity.
As up the rock they climbed they soon espied
Two female travellers on its rugged side,
One on her knees, hands clasped in ardent prayer,
The other on her feet with scornful air.

O cherished objects ! unexpected hour !
Each knight discerned and owned his fair one's power ;
Behold them then, these sinful men and dames,
Within the shrine which love supremely shames ;
The English lady briefly tells her tale,

How her strong arm was able to prevail
O'er Martinguerre, by heavenly impulse led,
Thus to avenge the honour of her bed.
The prudent fair one, as a slight resource,
Had seized the slaughtered robber's heavy purse ;
For gold, though current in this world— she knew
Was useless in the world she sent him to.
Then clearing in the horror of the night
The walls ill-fitting of that fearful site,
With sword in hand to the adjacent shore
Her fellow victim, trembling still, she bore ;
Then went on board a craft which lay in view,
And woke the captain and his drowsy crew,
Who, highly bribed, the fugitives to please,
Consent to navigate Tyrrhenian seas.
Till favoured by the winds' capricious blast,
Or else by Heav'n whose wisdom's unsurpassed,
To Magdalena's feet they come at last.

O sovran virtue! Mighty miracle!
At every word Judith was fain to tell,
Her warrior's noble heart felt love abate ;
Disgust, soon turning to a deadly hate,
Succeeded to love's former ecstasy ;
Nor is he paid in different currency.

While La Trimouille who had esteemed more bright
His Dorothy than even morning light,
Conceived her ugly, wit she seemed to lack ;
So with contempt he turned on her his back.
Whilst she beholds in him a prince of fools,
Her scorn increasing as his ardour cools.
From out her cloud the Magdalen surveyed
With joy the swift conversion she had made.
But Mary Magdalen was much deceived,
When from the Saints in glory she received
This grace, that, every lover come her way
Should cease to love his fancy from the day,
That brought him to her rock's vicinity.
Alas! the Saint, by slip of memory,
Had never asked that once the lovers healed,
They should not to a newer mistress yield.
Saint Maximin had not the case foreseen,
Wherefore the English infidel, I ween,
To Poitou's knight extended wide her arms,
While Arundel was ravished by the charms
Of Dorothy, enamoured as of old.
The abbé Tritemus has even told,
That Magdalen at such an unforeseen
Result, from Heaven's height to smile was seen.
I quite believe it, and excuse the *trait* ;

Virtue is good, but rule us though it may,
To old pursuits our thoughts are prone to stray.
It chanced our lovers scarce St. Balm had left
Ere of its spell, each heart anon was reft ;
No charm it boasts when once the precincts past ;
The shrine alone commands the spell to last.
Trimouille was much confused when down below,
To think he had disliked his mistress so ;
He found her even sweeter than before,
And sang her praises ever more and more ;
While Dorothy to bitter grief a prey,
With love renewed her error wiped away,
Contrite Arundel's arms his fair enfold ;
Each loved again as they had loved of old.
And I'll avouch that Magdalen above,
On viewing them, forgave this mutual love.
The Briton stern and Poitou's knight so kind,
Each with his dame on pillion behind,
To Orléans their steady course inclined.
Each hero burning fierce with martial flame,
Eager to vindicate his country's fame.
Lovers discreet, and generous enemies
Together they advance in friendly guise ;
In honour of their kings they fight no more,
Nor of the rival beauties they adore.

CANTO X

How Agnes Sorel is pursued by the almoner of John Chandos.—Lamentations of her lover—What happened to the fair Agnes in a convent.

And shall I then to every canto stick
A preface? Moralizing makes me sick ;
For sure I am, a story frankly told,
Where simple truth we undisguised behold,
Narrated brief, from false refinement free,
Or too much wit or too much pedantry,
To parry censure must at least prevail—*
So let us, reader, roundly to my tale.
When pictures merit from resemblance claim,
To Nature true, we disregard the frame.

Now good King Charles for Orléans' departs,
Inspires fresh courage in his soldiers' hearts,
Raises the drooping destiny of France,

* V A R I A N T : *To parry censure must at least prevail,*
Onward then, Voltaire, roundly to thy tale.

And bids his troops with joyous hope advance.
Of nought he spoke but marching to the fight,
He nothing seemed to feel but war's delight ;
Yet secretly the soul-drawn sigh found vent,
For from his mistress far his course was bent ;
Her for a moment only to have left,
Of Agnes for an hour to be bereft !
This was an act that virtue might conceive,
'T was of himself the dearer half to leave.

When in his chamber Charles was left alone,
And calm within his heart resumed the throne,
Which glory's demon planted in his soul
The other demon who owns love's control,
Rushed to his mind and in his turn explained ;
He pleaded best, the victory was gained.
With absent air, the good prince lent an ear
To all the projects he was forced to hear.*
Then sought in privacy some short relief,
And there to ease an heart depressed with grief,
His pen portrayed the ardour of his soul,
While big tears blotted oft the impassioned scroll.

* V a r i a n t : To all the plans fat *Louvet* made him hear.

Nor was Bonneau at hand those tears to dry.
A stupid gentleman in ordinary,
With the soft missive was in haste dispatched,
And ere the enamoured Prince an hour had watched
(O bitter, bitter grief ! O ! King forlorn !)
He saw his courier with the note return.
With dire and dread forebodings on the rack,
"Alas !" the monarch cried, "what brings you back ?
How's this, my note returned ?" "All's lost," he said,
"These Britons Sire... we're ruined, we're betrayed ;
Sire... they have taken Agnes and the Maid."

At such rough tidings so abruptly told
The swooning monarch's sluggish blood ran cold ;
Fainting he falls, nor do his powers revive
But to keep keener agonies alive.
He, who with courage such a shock could bear,
Has never been true lover of a Fair ;
And such was Charles, who with this tale opprest,
By turns felt rage and anguish rive his breast ;
His loyal knights bestowed their cares in vain
In mitigation of his bitter pain,
Which in its strength was like to turn his brain :
For slighter cause his royal Sire ran mad !
"Let them take Joan," he cried in accents sad,

"My knights, my clergy, the remaining land,
Fortune still spares to my supreme command,
Take all—ye cruel Britons, but restore
To my fond arms the beauty I adore.
O Love! O Agnes! O unhappy king!
But what relief can lamentations bring?
She's lost, O let me lay me down and die!
She's lost and while I impotently cry,
Perhaps some Briton rude enjoys those charms
Designed to bless a gentle Frenchman's arms.
Shall that sweet mouth, with other kisses pressed
Inspire such ecstasies as fired my breast?
Another!—Heaven, to dream it is despair!
Who knows but at this moment terrible,
She shares his transports and enjoys as well?
Alas! with her warm temperament she may
Quite possibly her luckless love betray!
The king could bear incertitude no more,
But sought adepts well versed in mystic lore
Sorbonne professors, all the magic set
Of Jews and all, who know the alphabet.

"Sirs," said the king, "'t is fitting ye make known,
If Agnes guards for me her faith alone,

If for her lover, still her bosom sighs,
Take heed, nor dare deceive your king with lies,
Reveal the truth, for all must come to light."
The wizards, amply paid, begin out right ;
In Latin, Syriac, Hebrew and Greek ;
The one of them the monarch's palm will seek,
Another draws a figure in a square,
Some upon Mercury and Venus stare,
And one turns o'er his psalter for a prayer,
Pronounces loud *Amen*, then mutters low ;
Others in empty glasses omens show,
And one describes a circle on the floor :
For thus the truth was sought in days of yore.*
The eager king their futile labours viewed,
Till, praising Heaven, they all at once conclude,
And bid him set his jealous heart at rest,
Calm the suspicious tumult in his breast,
Since gracious Heaven, most singularly kind,
A faithful mistress to his arms assigned,
For constant Agnes ne'er had stepped astray!

* Variant: *For thus the truth was sought in days of yore,*
There is not one who doubteth of his art,
Nor holds the devil therein has a part.
The eager king, *etc.*

Henceforth confide in what such prophets say.

The Almoner, inexorable brute
That very moment chose to crown his suit :
Spite of her tears, in spite of Agnes' cries,
He rudely makes her youthful charms his prize ;
Imperfect pleasure though was all he stole,
Embraces coarse, that never touch the soul,
Detested union delicacy mourns,
Degrading transports real passion scorns ;
For who within his arms would press with pride
A mistress who should thrust her lips aside,
Whose tears of bitterness the couch bedew ?
The generous soul has other bliss in view ;
No thrill of happiness imbues his heart,
Save he can transport to his fair impart ;
An almoner is not so nice, indeed,
But with a spur mounts his unwilling steed ;
Nor heeds the feelings of his fair a jot,
Regardless if she pleasure feels or not.
The page o'ercome with love, yet timid too,
Who forth had hurried as a gallant true,
To honour and to serve the goddess bright
Destined his ardent hope to cheat or blight,
At length returned ! alas, returned too late,

Entering in haste he views the churchman's state,
Who with his brutal pleasure, all a-fire
Tames and compels his prey to his desire.
Monrose springs sword in hand, with horror pale,
To castigate the beastly animal.
The almoner's impure concupiscence
Yields to the urgent calls of self defence ;
From bed he starts, and grasps his staff in rage,
Parries a while then grapples with the page.
Both are right bold, courage and love inspire
Monrose, the priest mad rage and sensual fire.

Those happy folk who taste midst verdant fields,
That calm which innocence unclouded yields,
Have often seen, near thickets spreading wide,
Greedy for prey, a wolf with carnage dyed,
Whose fangs the fleece destroy, while smoking blood
Of the poor sheep he ravenous laps for food ;
If a strong mastiff with stout heart, cropped ears
And well set jaws now suddenly appears,
Like a winged arrow darting from afar,
Resolute, active and prepared for war ;
Soon the carnivorous offender drops
The bleating victim from his foaming chops,
Flies at the dog and summoning his might

Sustains an obstinate and sturdy fight ;
The wounded wolf soon feels infuriate glow
And thinks to strangle his determined foe ;
While the poor panting sheep beside them lays
And for its champion dog sincerely prays.
'T was thus the sinewy priest with iron heart
And Herculean arm played savage part
Against the page, while Agnes lay half-dead,
The victor's worthy prize upon the bed.
The Host and Hostess, valets, chambermaid,
In fine the family one will obeyed,
Roused by the noise, they mount and straight in view,
The combat seeing rush between the two.
The audacious churchman from the chamber drive,
For the fair page, all feelings are alive,
Since youth and grace combined, can never fail
To waken pity and o'er lust prevail,
Monrose so brave thus ended his affair,
Remained alone beside his beauteous fair.
His scouted rival with a front of brass,
Marched slowly off to say his morning mass.

Agnes ashamed and torn with pangs acute
To think a priest should thus her charms pollute,
But more so that the gentle page should spy

How she was vanquished so unworthily ;
Shed tears, and dared not look him in the face ;
Nay, such her sorrow at this dire disgrace,
She then had wished grim Death with sudden aim,
To close her eyes and terminate her shame.
"Kill me," was all she said, "and end my woes !"
"What ! would you die ?" exclaimed the young Monroe.
"And shall I lose you by this recreant priest ?
Oh no ! Suppose you even had transgressed,
'T were better live and expiate the offence.
Say, is 't our part to practise penitence ?
The unwilling victim of superior force,
Agnes divine, what need of such remorse ?
Or wherefore suffer for another's crime ?"
If his discourse could not be called sublime,
His speaking eyes emitted such a fire,
As in the fair one's bosom served to inspire,
Of late detested life some faint desire.

'T was time to dine—for in despite of woe,
As we poor mortals, from experience know,
The wretched find in abstinence no treat,
In raging fury still the sufferers eat ;
For this sage reason all the scribes divine,
Good Virgil, babbling Homer—all, in fine

Who still are honoured by our thinkers deep,
Though o'er their page they gape and fall asleep—
Before the din of conflict is o'erpast,
Love to expatiate on a rich repast.
Know then fair Agnes and her gentle guide,
Dined *tête-à-tête* by the fair one's bed-side,
Where such at first their shy embarrassment,
Both on their plate their timid glances bent;
Then bolder grown they dared a stealthy look,
And bolder still a fresh occasion took.

Reader, thou know'st that in youth's flowery days,
When all our senses own health's vivid blaze
A hearty meal excites within each vein
Those seeds of passion which we can't restrain,
Attuned to joy our quickened pulses move,
We yield to the necessity of love.
Our bosoms with soft, thrilling transports glow,
The flesh is frail, and Satan tempts us so.

Monrose in moments with such danger fraught,
Unable to resist the glowing thought,
Falls at the feet of the afflicted fair,
And kneeling so, prefers his amorous prayer.
"Beloved object ! Idol of my soul !

Death is alone henceforth my aim and goal ;
What ! Can my fervent passion fail to gain,
That which a ruffian's force has dared obtain ?
Ah, if a crime ensured another's bliss,
What's due to him who does not act amiss ?
When love no sentiment save virtue knows ;
'T is Love who speaks—you ought to hear his woes."

Good was the argument which he preferred ;
The voice of reason Agnes quickly heard ;
Yet a long hour would with resistance coy
Retard the moment of expected joy ;
By such soft dalliance does lady's guile
Pleasure and virtue seek to reconcile ;
Right well they know resistance oft will please
A great deal better than excessive ease.
At length Monrose, the fortunate Monrose,
The fondest rights of favoured lovers knows !
The truest happiness is surely his,
When in her arms he tastes supremest bliss ;
The English prince increase of glory brings
Only by humbling of rival kings ;
Though haughty Henry had e'en conquered France,
Superior still I deem the page's chance.
Alas, how transitory are our joys !

How soon mischance felicity destroys!
Scarce had the gentle page love's torrent owned,
Scarce had voluptuousness his soul enthroned,
When English troops arrive with warlike din,
They rush the stairs, the door is beaten in.
Enraptured pair! that with love-transports burn,
The Almoner had played ye this foul turn.*
Agnes, who terror-struck lost every sense,
Was with her lover to be hurried thence
Anon to Chandos both were to be ta'en;
If Chandos dooms them, what must be their pain?
These tender lovers had already proved,
How seldom pity his rough bosom moved!
Shame and confusion their bright eyes expressed,
Despair and grief their air forlorn confessed.
And yet they languished on and ogled too,
Blushing at pleasures which were still so new.

Variant: The Almoner had played ye this foul turn.
Agnes they seize, her gentle swain as well,
And lead before Chandos the terrible;
I' faith for Satan's aid I'd need to go
If I'd describe that you might rightly know,
What trouble and confusion and sore fright
Despair and desolation, dark as night
What horrors infinite the souls engage,
Of lovely Agnes and her handsome page.
And yet they languished, *etc.*

To cruel Chandos what will either say?
But as it chanced while still upon their way,
A score of cavaliers of Charles' train
They met, who vigilantly scoured the plain,
To ascertain if any news was known,
Concerning Agnes and the maiden Joan.

When mastiffs, fighting cocks or lovers twain
Meet nose to nose upon the open plain,
Or some stout prop of efficacious grace,
Comes with a sturdy Jesuit face to face,
Or one who Luther's, Calvin's doctrine holds,
An ultramontane priest by chance beholds,
Without much loss of time begins the fray,
Tongue, pen or lance wage fight in fell array ;
'T was even so when chivalry of France
Beheld the British, then began the dance ;
No sooner seen, than as a falchion light,
They rushed impetuous to the sudden fight,
The hardy sons of Britain stand their ground,
And many a sturdy blow is dealt around.

The fiery steed that Agnes chanced to bear,
Was active, young and mettlesome like her ,
He plunged, curvetted, reared with eager heat,

While Agnes jumped and bounded in her seat,
And when the clang of arms increased his might,
Swallowed the bit and spent his head-strong flight ;
Vainly awhile the timid Agnes tried
With feeble hand his rapid course to guide ;
Too weak to rule, she must at length comply,
And to her horse remit her destiny.
Monrose perceived not 'midst the fierce affray,
Whither the fugitive now bent her way ;
Her courser flew as swiftly as the wind,
And left the combatants six miles behind,
Nor halted ever till he stood before
An ancient convent's solitary door.
A forest stood, the monastery near
And close beside there flowed a streamlet clear,
With many a devious turn meandering,
It took its course where flowers were blossoming.
Green rising hills the distant landscape bound,
Whose vine-clad steeps perennially were crowned
With gifts wherewith the race of man was blest
When Father Noah left his cumb'rous chest,
The void in human nature to replace ;
And weary of beholding watery space,
He haply chanced the secret to divine
By a new process to produce good wine.

Flora, Pomona and their Zephyr train
With fragrant breath perfume the healthful plain ;
Unwearying the scene which meets the eyes,
Our primal parents' very Paradise
Ne'er to the view more smiling vales portrayed,
More fortunate was Nature ne'er displayed ;
The air, with balmy influence could impart
Calm and contentment to the ruffled heart,
Soften the sorrows of solicitude
And make vain worldlings sigh for solitude.

Agnes beside the rippling streamlet lay,
Her fine eyes pleased the convent to survey ;
And soon no agonizing pains she felt.
It was, my friend, a convent where nuns dwelt.
"Ah! charming sanctuary," cried the fair.
"Resort where Heaven hath shed its blessings rare,
Sweet spot of innocence and peace the fane,
By prayer, perhaps, I may its grace obtain.
Perchance expressly am I hither brought,
To weep the sins with which my life is fraught.
Spouses of God, these sainted sisters meet,
Embalm with virtue their sequestered seat,
While I, of sinners the most famous known,
My days have spent to every weakness prone."
Thus spoke the fair aloud, and as she gazed,

Observed the cross high o'er the portal raised ;
Then prostrate in humility adored
Salvation's emblem to lost man restored ;
And feeling o'er her soul compunction press,
She straightway thought of going to confess ;
From love to piety, the ways not wide,
So closely each to weakness is allied.

It chanced the saintly Abbess of this pile
To Blois had journeyed there to stay awhile,
Her convents' privileges to maintain,
Who, while thus absent had consigned the reign,
To sister *Busy*, of the holy crew.
This nun now promptly to the parlour flew ;
The gate, to welcome Agnes, opened wide.
"Enter, O welcome traveller," she cried.
"What fostering patron, or what joyous day
Hath to our altars prompted thus to stray,
This beauty dangerous to human sight?
Or art thou Saint or Angel full of love,
Who soft descending from bright realms above,
Long by the voice of innocence implored,
Deigns't to console the daughters of the Lord?"
"Too flattering, holy sister, your report,"
Agnes replies, "a sinner seeks support ;

With grievous sins are all my days o'ercast,
And if to Paradise I win at last,
'T will be by Magdalen's authority.
The strange, capricious hand of destiny
God, my good angel—not to count my horse
Have to this spot designed my errant course.
Remorse now fills my agitated soul,
Nor yet doth hardened vice usurp control.
I honoured virtue e'en when most I strayed,
And now to find her crave your pious aid ;
Led as I think by wisdom infinite,
For my soul's safety here to rest this night."

The prudent *Busy* with a pious care
Gently encouraged the repentant fair ;
She ceases not the charms of grace to tell,
And escorts Agnes to her private cell ;
A cell well-lit, and decked with flowers and neat,
Of gallant ornaments the charming seat,
Ample and soft was the commodious bed,
As Love himself some bridal couch had spread.
Agnes beheld, and praising Providence,
Saw there were sweets in pious penitence.

The supper done (I ne'er could think it fit,

A matter of such moment to omit.)

Busy the charming stranger thus addressed,

"Thou knowst, my love, night rears her sable crest ;

'T is now the time when wicked spirits prowl,

To tempt on every side the saintly soul.

'T is fitting we a worthy feat perform,

Let's sleep together, that should Satan's storm

Against us rise, we may thus being two

Give to Beelzebub himself his due."

Can I, O Reader, without too much shame

What sister *Busy* truly was proclaim?

I must be candid, and reveal the truth ;

My sister *Busy* was a lusty youth ;

He joined with Hercules his force, the grace

And winning softness of Adonis' face ;

Nor yet his one and twentieth year he knew,

As white as milk and fresh as morning dew.

The lady Abbess for some private end

Lately selected him to be her friend,

Thus sister Batchelor lived within the Gate,

Nor spared his pretty flock to cultivate ;

So great Achilles, as a maiden drest

At Lycomedes court was greatly blest,

And by his Deidamia's arms carest.

The penitent had scarce on couch reclined
With her companion, when she seemed to find
In nun a metamorphosis most strange.
Doubtless she benefited by the exchange.
To scream, complain, the convent to alarm
Had proved a scandal only fraught with harm ;
To suffer patiently, be silent too,
To be resigned was all that she could do.
Besides on such occasions it is rare
For much reflection to find time to spare.
But when the sister's cloistered fury ceased,
(For all require some interval at least,)
Fair Agnes, not without a certain shame,
Found time this silent sentiment to frame ;
" 'T is then in vain I try," she thus pursued,
"To shape my course as honest woman should ;
'T is vain on aspiration's wing to rise,
One is not always virtuous though one tries."

CANTO XI

How the Convent is sacked by the English—Combat of Saint George, Patron of England with Saint Denis, Patron of France.

No useless preface shall I here employ,
But tell, how wearied with forbidden joy,
Clasped in each others arms, exhausted quite
The lovers slept, inebriate with delight.

Sudden a dreadful din drives sleep afar,
On all sides gleams the horrid torch of war ;
Death, grisly death now blazes on their view,
And streams of blood the convent's site bedew.
This filibustering and British horde,
The Gallic troops had routed in discord,
The conquered, sword in hand, scoured o'er the plain
By victors followed who pursued amain,
Striking, destroying, shouting out of breath :
"Yield Agnes or prepare for instant death !"
But none had any tidings of the fair,
Till hoary Colin, who of flocks had care,

Said: "Sirs, my sheep while tending yesterday,
A miracle of beauty came my way,
And gained admittance in yon convent's gate."
"'T was she," the Britons cry, with joy elate,
And instant scale the sacred walls,—behold!
The famished wolves 'midst the defenceless fold.

Searching from cell to cell the convent round,
Thro' chapel, dormitory, cave profound,
These enemies of those who serve God's name,
All things assail *sans* scruple and *sans* shame.
Ah! sisters Agnes, Ursula, Marton!
Why lift your hands to Heaven and vainly run?
Poor moaning doves with trouble in your eye,
Death in your bosom, whither shall ye fly?
Would ye to Altar's dread asylum get,
Of holy chastity the amulet?
Vain and unheeded are your fervent vows,
In vain you invoke your heavenly spouse.
Before His eyes, nay, at His very shrine,
Vile ravishers compel you to resign
That pure and sacred faith, which heretofore,
Your pretty lips so innocently swore.
Some mundane readers, prone to silly fun,
May ridicule the sacred name of nun;

Frivolous wits, a shameless mocking crew,
Who jest at rapes and ravished maidens too ;
Let them say on—Alas ! my sisters dear,
Full well I recognize your grief and fear ;
I see your simple graces, timid charms
Struggling, in vain, in blood-polluted arms ;
I see your lips become disgusted food
Of felon's kisses, reeking still with blood,
Who by an act detestable and dire,
Their lips blaspheming and their eyes on fire,
Mingle voluptuousness with injury
And offer love in all ferocity !
Whose hateful breath emits a poisonous stench,
Whose beards are hard, whose hands are formed to wrench
The hideous forms, the bloody arms, smoke-stained,
Suggested death, caresses only feigned ;
And from their savage wrath one might have said,
Devils these were who angels ravished !

Crime had already to their shameless view,
Tinged front of each chaste fair with crimson hue,
Sister Ribondi so devout and wise,
Had fallen to the haughty Shipunk's prize.
Wharton the infidel and stern Barclay too

Poor sister Amidon at once pursue.
They weep, they pray and swear ; press, push and run ;
When in the tumult's seen, *Busy*, the nun.
Struggling with Bard and Parson, who employ
Their utmost force—not knowing she's a boy !
Nor was't thou Agnes, 'mid the sorrowing band,
To be neglected by the assailer's hand.
Tender, enchaunting object, 't was thy lot
Always to sin, whether thou wouldst or not ;
The blood-stained chief of this unholy crew,
Courageous victor, he sped after you ;
While troops, obedient, in their passions still,
Resigned this honour to his potent will.

But Heaven, just e'en in its severe decrees
Will sometimes limit human miseries,
For whilst these gentlemen of Britain's isle
With foul pollution thus had dared defile
Of Holy Sion this most sacred place,
From Heaven's high vault Gaul's patron full of grace,
Good Denis, to bright virtue always kind,
Found means to escape from thence and leave behind
Fierce turbulent Saint George, of France the foe.
From Paradise he bent his course below ;
But, in descending to our earthly sphere,

No more on sun-beam did he dare appear ;
Too clearly thus might men his march descry.

He sought him out the God of mystery,
The God of cunning, foe of noise and light,
Who flieth everywhere and goes by night.
He favours (more's the pity!) rogues that steal,
But leads the man impressed by wisdom's seal ;
To church and court he hies ; at all times there ;
While anciently of love he had the care.
He first enveloped in a cloud obscure
The worthy Denis, with him made the tour,
By secret path which no one had descried ;
They talked in whispers, marching side by side.
The faithful guardian of Gaul's goodly set,
Not very far from Blois, the Maiden met,
Who by a little, winding path drew near,
Still mounted on the clumsy muleteer ;
Praying some lucky chance might guide her way
Where her late lost and much loved armour lay.
When Denis from afar the maid espied
In tone benign, the pious patron cried :
"O maiden mine ! O Virgin most elect !
Still destined kings, and damsels to protect,
O come ! and succour virtue in distress,

O come ! and mad, licentious rage repress ;
Come, let that arm, that guards the Fleurs de Lys,
To blessed sprigs of promise bring release.
Yon convent view ;—they violate, time flies,
Come then, my Maid !" He spoke ; she thither hies,
While the good patron, as her squire in rear,
With lusty stripes whips on the muleteer.

Behold then Joan, amongst the ignoble throng
Who dare treat venerable dames with wrong !
The maid was naked ; a rude British knight
Losing his head at such a tempting sight,
He covets her ; and, thinks some maiden gay
Has sought the sisters to enjoy the fray ;
To her he runs and on her nakedness
Seeks to indulge his filthy nastiness ;
But he was answered by a lusty blow,
Which cleft his hose and laid the villain low ;
Swearing that oath by Frenchmen all revered,
Expressive word, to pleasure's feats endeared ;
Though in their anger oft the herd profane
Are known to take this blessed word in vain.
Trampling his corpse, with crimson current dyed,
Joan to this wicked people forthwith cried ;
"Cease cruel troop, leave innocence alone,

Fell ravishers, and fear both God and Joan.”
Each miscreant till the mighty work was done,
Gave heed to naught, intent upon his nun ;
Young asses thus will crop the verdant glades,
Spite of the cries of masters or of maids.
Joan, who their deeds audacious thus describes,
Transported feels a saintly horror rise ;
Invoking Heaven and backed by Denis’ power
With glaive in hand, of blows she deals a shower,
From nape to nape and thence from spine to spine,
Cutting and slashing with her blade divine ;
Transpiercing for intended crime the one,
The other striking for offences done ;
Right well her blade the felon cohort mowed,
She stabbed each wretch whilst each his nun bestrode,
And as in ebb of lust the soul took flight
Sent them to Hell expiring in delight.

Unblushing Wharton whose lubricious fire,
Had to its acme spurred his foul desire,
First of the troop was Wharton’s business done,
He first got disentangled from his nun ;
Then seized his arms and with undaunted look,
Awaiting Joan a different posture took.

O ! thou great Saint, the state's protecting shield,
Denis, who saw this well-contested field,
Deign to my faithful muse those feats indite,
Which Joan enacted to thy reverend sight ;
Joan trembled first and cast a wondering stare ;
"My saint, dear Denis, what do I see there?
My corset and celestial armour too,
The valued present I received from you,
Upon that felons' back insults my view !
See my gay casque, behold my hauberk bright."
'T was very truth and maiden Joan was right.
Agnes had changed her silken petticoat,
For Joan's bright helm and strongly mailed coat ;
When Chandos stripped her, Wharton dared aspire
To these fair spoils, as Chandos' trusty squire.
O Joan of Arc ! redoubted heroine !
You combat to regain those arms divine,
For your great monarch Charles so long abused,
And scores of Benedictine nuns misused,
To please Saint Denis and correct his foes.
Denis, who saw you lavish lusty blows,
On your own helmet gay in crested shade,
And cuirass ringing from your trenchant blade.
When Vulcan for the Thunderer supplies
Those mighty cannon men too lightly prize,

His blind companions labour underground,
And Etna's caverns far and wide resound ;
The sparkling anvils ring with hearty blows,
Less heavy, less reiterate than those.

Encased in iron, our Briton, full of pride,
Falls back, his soul with wonder stupefied,
To find himself so vigorously beset,
By a young, tempting, fresh, and plump brunette.
To view her naked filled him with remorse,
To wound that body robbed his arm of force,
He but defends himself and backward moves,
Admiring in his foe the charms he loves ;
Those treasures which impel his heart to scorn
The martial virtues which her soul adorn.

When in the midst of happy Paradise
Denis of France no longer met his eyes,
St. George of England harboured little doubt
What schemes his brother Denis was about.
Through all the ways of the celestial plain,
He turned his anxious scrutiny in vain,
Nor wavered long, but called his gallant steed,
That horse whereof in legend much we read.
His charger came, St. George the saddle pressed,

His sabre by his side, his lance in rest ;
And journeyed through the dreadful space that man
With vain audacity desires to span ;
Through divers Heavens, midst globes emitting light,
That bold Descartes in wild romantic flight,
Saw through a mass of shifting atoms move,
In giddy vortex difficult to prove,
Which Newton, greater dreamer still, descried,
Turning themselves, of compass reft, and guide,
Around mere nothing through the vacuum wide.

St. George inflamed, his rage then boiling high,
Traversed this void in twinkling of an eye,
To where Loire's gleaming waters smoothly run,
And Denis thought the victory was won.
Some comet thus doth in deep night appear,
Marking with horrid light its long career ;
The people tremble to behold its tail,
The Pope's appalled, the superstitious quail,
And all foretell that vintages shall fail.

As in the distance valiant George describes
His confrère Denis, swift his passions rise ;
And brandishing his deadly lance the while,
These things he said in true Homeric style,

"O Denis ! Denis ! weak and peevish foe,
Timid support of party doomed to woe,
Is 't thus to earth in secret you descend
To bring my English heroes to sad end?
Think you the destinies you can disarm
With a winged jackass and a woman's arm.
Nor fear you the just vengeance of my lance,
Which soon shall punish you, your drab and France !
Your sour sponce shaking on your twisted neck
Has once before your carcass ceased to deck :
I wish to crop, e'en in your church's face
Your bold pate set but badly in its place,
And send you packing to your Paris walls.
Fit patron whom each tender cockney calls,
In your own suburbs where your mass is said,
There bide and let them once more kiss your head."

Good Denis lifting slowly to the skies
His pious hands, in noble tones replies,
"O puissant George ! O brother saint most sage,
Will you be ever blinded thus by rage?
Since first we met in the celestial hall,
Your heart devout has overflowed with gall !
Befits it us who rank amongst the bless'd,
Enshrined saints, so much on earth caress'd ;

We, who to others should example set,
Must we in quarrels thus ourselves forget?
Is it your wish to carry discords rude
Into the land of pure beatitude?
How long shall saints who from your nation rise
Carry confusion into Paradise?
O Britons! nation fierce; too bold by far,
Just Heaven in turn will wage the watchful war;
And of your mode of acting weary grown,
Will to your jealous cares no more be prone,
For devotees from you are never known.
Ah! wretched saint, the pious, choleric,
Damned patron of a race of blood ne'er sick;
Be tractable for once and let me bring
Safety to France and succour to my King."

At this harangue, George with redoubled ire
Felt his blood boiling, and his cheek on fire.
The cockney patron he surveyed a while,
Then (taking Denis for a coward vile)
His courage rose and at the saint he drove,
Much as a hawk might at a timid dove.
Denis retreats and prudently commands
His faithful ass to wait on his demands,
His winged ass, his joy and aid in strife,

"Come," he cries loud, "once more defend my life." *

Using such words, good Denis had forgot
A saintly life's a thing one loseth not.
From Italy our dapple of grey hue,
Just then arrived and I, narrator true,
Why he returned already have displayed.
To Saint he bent his back with saddle 'rayed.
Our patron with delight his charger viewed,
And felt his courage and his strength renewed.
With subtile malice he from earth had ta'en
A sword but lately grasped by Briton slain ;
Then brandishing the glittering blade on high,
At adverse George he doughtily let fly.
The British Saint by indignation led,
Aims three dread blows at his devoted head ;
All three are parried, Denis guards his sconce,
Directing in return his blows at once
Upon the horse and eke the cavalier.
From clashing swords the vivid sparks appear ;
From hilt to point their clashing sabres meet,

* V a r i a n t : "*Come,*" he cries loud, "*once more defend my life.*
'Gainst wicked men protect my destiny."

The saintly beast returned from Italy,
Forthwith, and I, true scribe proceed to tell,
In words succinct what presently befell.
To Saint he bent, etc.

With dread intent in the dire combat's heat ;
Seeking the neck with scaly armour bound,
Or casque, where lambent glory played around ;
Or aiming at the still more tender point,
Where cuirass meets the plated codpiece joint.
These fruitless efforts but increase their spleen,
And Victory stood balancing between.
When lo ! the ass's tones discordant sound,
As grating octaves, harshly bray around,
The Heavens tremble ; and the woods reply
With shuddering echoes to the grating cry.
Saint George grew pale ; the other active saint
Managed adroitly a celestial feint ;
A back stroke slit St. George's nose in twain ;
The bleeding lip fell on the ensanguined plain.
George keeps his courage, though he lost his nose ;
Forthwith to venge his outraged face he goes ;
And with an oath conformant to the way,
In which men swear in England to this day,
What Peter cut from Malchus long ago
He lopped from Denis with a dexterous blow.

At such a sight, and at the voice so fell
Of the holy ass ; at cries so terrible,
Great the commotion that prevailed on high ;

And the wide portal of the starry sky
Flew open and from the vaults where seraphs dwell
Issued, at length, the angel Gabriel ;
Extended wings his placid course sustain,
He soared majestic through the aerial plain
In his right hand that mystic wand he bore,
Which Moses stretched aloft, in days of yore,
When the obedient sea piled wave on wave,
O'erwhelmed whole nations in a watery grave.
"What's this?" he cried in anger ; "what a sight !
Two patron saints, the heirs of joy and light,
Participators of eternal grace,
Adopt the quarrels of the mundane race !
O ! let the foolish sons of women feel
The rage of passion, and the force of steel ;
Abandon them to their profaner souls,
Their sickly bodies and their grosser souls,
In vice created and to death consigned ;
But ye, immortal sons of Heaven refined,
Nourished for ever with ambrosia pure,
Would ye such blissful scenes no more endure ?
Are ye stark mad ? Good Heavens ! an ear, a nose ;
Ye, who on mercy and sweet grace repose,
Whose duty 't is the reign of peace to teach,
Can ye in some kings' cause—I know not which—

A mortal quarrel and dispute embrace?
Either renounce the bright, empyreal space,
Or instant yield submissive to my laws ;
Let charity within plead her own cause ;
You, insolent St. George, pick up that ear,
And you, good master Denis, also hear,
Pick up that nose with saintly fingers blest ;
Let all things in their proper places rest !”

Obedient Denis straight restores the point
Of nose he put so lately out of joint ;
Whilst fiery George did Denis’ ear restore,
And either Saint to Gabriel muttered o’er
Oremus soft, whilst he replaced with care
Those bits of gristle as at first they were.
Blood, fibres, flesh unite with little pain,
Nor did a vestige on the Saints remain
Of the decapitated nose or ear ;
The flesh of Saints is e’en so firm and fair.

Then Gabriel with presidential air
Bade them embrace and end this strange affair.
Denis, all gentleness, sincerely kissed
His rough and rancorous antagonist,
But fiery George with an insidious kiss,

Swore Denis should in future pay for this.
The bright Archangel, (things thus reconciled,)
Took my two saints and with deportment mild,
Led them, one on each side, to Heaven, where
Bumpers of nectar banish strife and care.

Few readers will believe this combat brave ;
But round the walls Scamander's waters lave,
Have we not known two bands in martial pride,
From high Olympus fight on either side?
Have we not seen in English Milton's song,
Whole legions of the winged angelic throng,
Redden celestial plains with sanguine tide,
Mountains by hundreds scatter far and wide ;
And what is worse have big artillery?
If Michael and the Devil, anciently
Fought thus—why might not George and Denis too,
These precedents with emulation view?
Excited by examples of such note
To meet and try to cut each other's throat?

But while in Heaven peace was hovering ;
On earth alas ! it was a different thing,
Fell scene accursed of discord and of blows.
Good Charles went every where, nor knew repose,

Sighed Agnes' name, and sought and wept her plight ;
Meanwhile the thundrous Joan with constant might,
And bloody sword that owned no victors will,
Prepared to give fierce Wharton straight his fill ;
A mighty blow those monstrous parts destroyed
Which to defile the convent he employed ;
From his numbed hand the useless weapon fell,
He reeled and still blaspheming sunk to Hell.

The aged nuns their maiden champion greet,
Viewing the slaughtered Briton at her feet ;
And said with *Aves* : "'T is the justest case,
His punishment has struck the *sinning place*."
Sister Ribondi, whom in sacristy
He had o'ercome with impious victory,
Wept for the traitor, whilst she thanked the skies ;
And measuring the culprit with her eyes,
Exclaimed in charitable tones : "than he,
Alas ! alas ! none could more guilty be."





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